US Labour Unions Today
Basic Problems and Trends

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INTRODUCTION

p In the early 1960s, the US labour movement entered a new period of its development, a period, as described by Gus Hall, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the USA, "of mass discontent and mass probing, when injustices and inequities are challenged, when old concepts, old alliances and accepted practices no longer meet the needs of the rising struggles pressuring for change." [7•1

p The serious economic and political difficulties which American imperialism had run into in the preceding two decades created additional possibilities for the labour movement. Structural changes in the economy, the consequences of the scientific and technological revolution, the relative weakening of US positions in world industrial production, trade and monetary reserves, the altered international situation and the successes scored by the socialist countries—all these factors tended to aggravate the social antagonisms within the country and had impetus to an upsurge in the class struggle, introducing into it certain new features.

p Mass struggle in recent years has moved along four basic lines: for equality and civil rights for the black people; for peace and against the government's aggressive foreign policy; for democracy; for the vital interests and rights of the working class. These mass movements, which have been unfolding since the early 1960s against a background of a 8 noticeably heightened offensive against broad segments of the working people by the monopolies, determine the specific character of the present period in the labour movement.

p This book is devoted to a study of present developments in the US labour movement; it examines above all the present status of working people in the United States and the major aspects of the struggle of the working class to defend its economic interests and rights. Considerable attention is given to government labour policy under Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon, and the attitudes and reactions of labour unions to that policy. An examination is made of new trends in the progressive development of the trade union movement and the growth of union activity after the period of stagnation in which the American trade union movement found itself in the 1950s. Special attention is given to the strike movement and its specific features.

As noted in the documents of the Communist Party of the USA, the qualitative changes in the mass struggle of working people in the 1960s have made practicable the aspiration of the great mass of rank-and-file union members to transform the organised labour movement into an instrument of class struggle capable of dealing with today's problems. The period under consideration contains much that is important for assessing the possibilities and future prospects of the working people's struggle against the power of

the monopolies, the struggle for a democratic renovation of American society and the struggle for socialism.

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Notes

[7•1] Gus Hall, "The Communist Party—a Review and Perspective", *Political Affairs*, May 1966, p. 1.

CHAPTER I
THE MONOPOLIES
AND THE WORKING CLASS

THE CONCENTRATION OF CAPITAL AND PRODUCTION AND THE MONOPOLIES' CONTINUED CONSOLIDATION OF POWER

p A characteristic feature of US economic development in the 1960s was continued concentration of economic power in the hands of the monopolies. The power of giant corporations grew steadily: by the end of the Second World War there were 43 billionaire corporations in the USA, and 93 in 1959, whereas by 1962, the total number of companies (banking, insurance, industrial, transportation, etc.) with assets of over $1,000 million amounted to 116, in 1965—149, in 1967—194, and in 1970—252. [9•1

p Increased concentration and centralisation of capital over recent years has resulted in a new and significant growth in the power of the big banking monopolies. In 1967, there were about 14,000 commercial banks in the USA, with total assets of $452,300 million. At the same time, the 50 largest banks had assets of $186,600 million; in other words, less than 0.4 per cent of the banks controlled over 40 per cent of the country's total commercial banking assets. Furthermore, the aggregate assets of the five leading US banks comprised $74,800 million, or two-fifths of the assets of the 50 biggest banks. [9•2

Figures published annually in *Fortune* magazine illustrate 10 the rapid growth in these five banks' concentration of capital in recent years: [10•1

The Biggest Banks Assets (in million dollars) 1960 1970 Bank of America 11,941 9,200 8,832 4,539 4,423 29,740 24,526 25,835 10,979 12,112 Chase Manhattan Bank First National City Bank Chemical New York Corp Morgan Guaranty Trust Co.

p A small group of banks not only dominates the country's entire financial life, but also controls an ever greater part of the giant US corporations. Findings of the House Banking and Currency Committee show that most of the country's large corporations are controlled by 15 banks having a total of $113,000 million in assets. First National Bank of Chicago owns over 5 per cent of the shares in 401 companies; Chemical Bank New York Trust has representatives on the boards of directors of 278 companies; and Morgan Guaranty Trust owns from 5 per cent to 20 per cent of the shares in all the leading copper producing companies except Anaconda. [10•2

p Concentration of capital in American industry also reached an exceptionally high level in the 1960s. According to official figures, in 1964, 1,758 corporations with assets of $100 million or over owned 58.5 per cent of the capital, or assets, of all registered active corporations in all branches of the economy. [10•3

p The high degree of concentration of capital in the US manufacturing industry can be seen from data computed by University of Wisconsin Economics Professor Willard Mueller. In 1970, the 102 largest corporations (with assets of $1,000 million or over) of the 198,000 in this sector held 48 per cent of the overall total assets; 609 (with assets of 11 $100 million or over) held 76 per cent of the total assets; and 2,500 owned 88 per cent. [11•1 The manufacturing sector may also be used as an example showing the rate at which the concentration of capital in US industry proceeded after the Second World War. In 1948, the 200 largest corporations in this field owned about 48 per cent of the total assets, while in 1967, they owned 59 per cent. [11•2

p The trend toward continued increase in the concentration of production is no less apparent. In 1947, the 200 biggest companies' share of newly created value in the manufacturing sector was 30 per cent; in 1958 it was 38 per cent and in 1963—41 per cent. [11•3 The US Department of Commerce estimates show that if concentration continues at this rate, these 200 companies will in the next few years be producing one half the output of the manufacturing sector.

p A few big corporations in each of the major US industries are the basic producers of a given kind of product. Thus, entire industries—such as automobile manufacturing, aircraft manufacturing, copper refining, production of aluminium, tin and tin plate, electrical equipment, agricultural machinery, office equipment, alcoholic beverages, etc.—are often controlled by three or four giant corporations. For example, General Motors, Ford and Chrysler make 95 per cent of all new automobiles produced in the country. ALCOA, Reynolds Metals and Kaiser Aluminium and Chemical control nearly 90 per cent of the aluminium market; US Steel, Bethlehem Steel and Republic Steel put out about 60 per cent of the country's steel, and Anaconda, Kennecott Copper, American Smelting and Refining and Phelps Dodge produce virtually all of the country's refined copper. [11•4

p The big US companies have grabbed key positions not only in the economy of their own country, but in the entire world capitalist system. Of the 457 monopolies in the capitalist world with a turnover of over $250 million, 272, or 60 per cent, are American. The top three in volume of capital are US companies: General Motors, Standard Oil of 12 New Jersey and Ford Motor, in that order. As for the top positions in specific industries, the big three from the US head the list in automobile manufacturing; the dominating positions in the electrical engineering and electronics fields are held by General Electric, International Business Machines and Western Electric; US Steel is in first place in the ferrous metal industry; the largest in the chemical and the oil industry are E. I. Du Pont de Nemours and Standard Oil of New Jersey, in that order; and the world leader in meat processing is also a US monopoly—Swift. [12•1 The biggest US monopolies, according to data compiled by US economist Richard J. Barber, produce more than the

corresponding industries of any West European country, and their aggregate turnover exceeds the gross national product of several West European countries put together. General Motors, for example, writes Barber, which employs 700,000 foreign and American workers, has hundreds of suppliers, plants in practically every state and equipment in twenty-four foreign countries, is virtually—except for certain formal signs—a State in itself. [12•2 The gross national product of this "State" is greater than that of such countries as Argentina, Belgium, Switzerland, Denmark or Venezuela. [12•3

p Holding the key strategic positions in today's US economy, the biggest corporations and banks have in turn formed super-powerful financial and industrial empires that are controlled by several billionaire families. The multimillionaire Rockefeller family, for example, plays the decisive role in an empire consisting of nine banks and insurance companies, including such giants as Chase Manhattan Bank, Metropolitan Life Insurance and Equitable Life Assurance; six big oil companies, including Standard Oil of New Jersey; two railway and one aircraft companies. The empire also includes such giant corporations as Westinghouse Electric, Borden, American Sugar Refining, American Telephone and Telegraph and many others. The total assets of this financial and industrial group are estimated at $63,000 million.

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p The increasing concentration of capital and of production and the unprecedented growth of a few hundred corporations' monopoly power takes place under conditions of a fierce competitive struggle. Every year, thousands of small and, frequently, middle-sized and large companies, unable to withstand the onslaught of the giant corporations, are ruined, broken up and absorbed by bigger companies. As noted in the New Programme of the Communist Party of the USA: "Monopoly exacts its toll from small business and even from the larger non-monopoly capitalists. Using its superior economic resources in ruthless competition, employing its control over credits and prices, obtaining favours from government at the expense of small business, monopoly capital drives thousands of small and not-so-small businesses to bankruptcy and menaces the existence of others." [13•1

p Concentration of capital and centralisation of production are furthered to a large extent by the accelerated introduction of new machines and techniques into production. Technological progress, and particularly advances in the field of automation, all of which the big monopolies are able to apply in their operations, lend even greater impetus to the process wherein small and .middle-sized companies, unable to compete with the monopolies, go under or are absorbed. It is no accident that the number of company mergers and absorptions, especially in sectors with a high level of automation, went up sharply since the mid-1950s, that is, since the beginning of a period of relatively wider use of cybernetics, electronic computers and automatic control systems in the economy.

p Federal Trade Commission figures show that in 1950 there were 219 mergers in the manufacturing and extractive industries. The number grew to 844 in 1960, to about 1,000

in 1966 and exceeded 2,400 in 1968 [13•2 . In the ten-year period between 1955 and 1965, each of the 500 largest corporations on *Fortune* magazine's list (with the exception of 14) absorbed over 100 other companies. [13•3 It should be borne in mind, 14 however, that this did not always involve only small companies. In the period from 1962 through 1969, for example, 110 of the 500 biggest corporations on the *Fortune* list disappeared as a result of mergers. In 1968 alone, 26 of the largest 500 corporations were taken over by others. [14•1

p The fate of Spencer Chemical—which had assets of $106 million and was one of the 500 giant US corporations—may serve as an illustration of the present trend in the concentration of capital through absorptions and mergers. In 1962, Spencer Chemical absorbed twelve smaller companies, but a year later, it merged with Gulf Oil, the eighth largest corporation in the United States, with assets of $4,200 million. [14•2 Numerous examples of this kind clearly illustrate Lenin's conclusion that the old struggle between small and big capital is being resumed at a new and immeasurably higher stage when big companies fall into the same category as small ones. [14•3

p The basic trend now, as the rate of concentration of capital continues to increase, is the formation of conglomerate corporations. These giant diversified amalgamations arise as a result of mergers involving companies with no rational production ties between themselves and producing unrelated products. In 1968, over 90 per cent of the mergers of large companies (with assets exceeding $10 million) gave rise to conglomerates composed of completely heterogeneous companies. [14•4

Among the most characteristic conglomerates is International Telephone and Telegraph, which runs the telephone system in 123 countries and at the same time rents automobiles, publishes books, builds houses, bakes bread, operates hotels and motels, etc. [14•5 Another corporation, Textron, which originally manufactured only synthetic and woollen fabrics, now has 27 branches and 113 factories which put out helicopters, chicken feed, saws, fibre-glass boats, bathroom fixtures, lawn mowers, linseed oil and dozens of other kinds of 15 goods. [15•1 The following table shows how rapidly the assets of these conglomerates grow. [15•2

Assets (in million dollars) ('oinpHiiy I'.ifi/i 1SMJ5 IDlid 19«7 1W1K International Telephone & Telegraph 1 542 1 783 2 121 2 761 4 067* Ling- Tenico - V ought 323 336 468 1 833 2 770 Litton 086 916 1 172 1 562 1 855 Textron 720 851 1 132 1 446 1 704 Gulf & Western Industries . . . 117 182 317 644 1,314 * In 1969, International Telephone & Telegraph absorbed the large Hartford Fire Insurance Company, as a result of which IT&T's assets swelled by 50 per cent, going over $6,000 million. (*Time*, October 31, 1969, p. 54.)

p The mergers that took place in the 1960s and especially the creation of conglomerates accelerated the rate of centralisation of capital and increased the economic and political influence of a handful of monopolies on the country's destiny even more. It is noteworthy that in late 1968, even President Johnson's Cabinet Committee on Price Stability had to admit that the wave of mergers was leading to such a centralisation of economic power

that the "competitive, free enterprise economy" could end up being seriously undermined, and that the mergers could "threaten traditional American social and political values". [15•3 *Fortune*, a magazine for American business circles, has predicted that if the trend in mergers and concentration continues to develop at the same rapid rate, small and middle independent companies will disappear in a matter of ten years, leaving but 200 big companies, all of which will be conglomerates.

p As it amasses power and gains control over broad sectors of the American economy, the monopoly oligarchy rakes in fabulous profits. According to American sources, the top 500 US companies showed an increase of 86 per cent in clear profit during the period from 1960 through 1967, as 16 compared with a total increase in profits (after taxes) of 80 per cent by all companies over the same period. [16•1 *Fortune* magazine has computed that the profits of these 500 companies accounted for 73.7 per cent of the profits of all American companies in 1969, and 74.8 per cent in 1970. [16•2 Moreover, the profits of ten giant monopolies amounted to $6,500 million, or over 30 per cent of the profits of the 500 leading corporations. [16•3

p Such monopoly giants as General Motors, Standard Oil of New Jersey, American Telephone & Telegraph, General Electric, Ford Motor, Texaco, International Business Machines, Sacony Mobil Oil and others continually make record profits. American Telephone & Telegraph, for example, nets clear profits exceeding the revenues of 13 of the United states put together. Other big US corporations are not far behind.

p It should be noted that profit figures usually do not include the large incomes of corporation officials—the top managers. According to official figures for 1962, of the total number of managers working for the 19 largest American companies, six received annual salaries of over $500,000 each, 12 got from $375,000 to $500,000, and 28 made from $250,000 to $375,000. Fifty-six managers and top administrators of General Motors received a total of $15.7 million in salaries and bonusesthai is, more than the aggregate annual salaries of 606 of the highest paid government officials. In 1969, as a further example, Chairman of the Board of Directors of General Motors Corporation James M. Roche received $790,000 in the form of salary and other remuneration; Chairman of the Board of Directors of Ford Motor, multimillionaire Henry Ford received $515,000 (in addition to $3 million received in dividends); and the average annual income of Chairman of the Board of Directors of Chrysler Corporation Lynn Townsend between 1963 and 1969 amounted to $429,000. [16•4

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p As monopoly capital continues to increase its economic might and rake in fabulous profits, it makes every effort to conceal its exploiting role in the society and its undivided power over the country’s corporations. One theory in vogue and designed to satisfy modern capitalism’s acute need for protective camouflage is the theory of so-called people’s capitalism. The essence of the theory boils down to saying that as capitalism develops, property becomes “democratised”, that ownership of the means of production increasingly passes into the hands of millions of stockholders—workers and other wage

earners—and that they, that is, these stockholders, are owners just as much as the capitalists themselves.

p Just how unconvincing and far from the truth such pseudo-scientific allegations are can be seen from the caustic criticism levelled at them not only by Left-wing organisations and the labour unions, but by a good number of bourgeois writers. The myth about the “democratisation” of property and about the transformation of small and middle stockholders into "co-owners of corporations" has been exploded more than once by data published in the American press. It has been pointed out, for example, that although 17 million people were stockholders in early 1960s, 98.4 per cent of them, or 16,725,000 people, owned only 20 per cent of the total number of shares, while a small group of less than 275,000 people, or 1.6 per cent of all stockholders, controlled 80 per cent of all existing shares, valued at $320,000 million. [17•1

p A thorough analysis of statistical data on the distribution of share capital among the various categories of stockholders enabled well-known American economist Ferdinand Lundberg to conclude that practically all companies—big, middle and small—are controlled by a few powerful families. It is apparent, writes Lundberg, "... that from two to three up to twenty of the largest stockholders own very large to total percentage of the companies”, and that "concentration of ownership and control in a few hands is a built-in feature of the American economy". [17•2

p This small group of real owners of share capital need 18 possess only a ten per cent block of shares, and in many cases even less, in order to effect control over a bank or corporation. Multimillionaire Richard Mellon, for example, requires only 2.98 per cent of the ALCOA stock to maintain effective control of that aluminium company, and 1.78 per cent of the stock to control Gulf Oil. [18•1

p As for how much the working people of America participate in share capital, figures for 1965 show that the aggregate share of workers and farmers among all stockholders did not exceed 3 per cent. [18•2 This, then, is what the economic “partnership” between labour and capital under what the apologists of capitalism called "people’s capitalism" really looks like.

p The growing concentration of capital and production and the continuing increase in power of the monopolies took place with the active assistance of the Democratic Administration, whose domestic policy was directed toward broadening the sphere of government regulation in the economy and reflected the further development of state-monopoly capitalism. "With the direct help of the government,” Gus Hall noted at the 18th National Convention of the Communist Party of the USA, "there is taking place an unprecedented polarisation of wealth and monopoly control of finance and industry. With the direct intervention of the government our country’s economic life is being totally directed into channels that serve the profit interests of the top money lords. State power is increasingly a direct economic factor, a powerful instrument for guaranteeing maximum profits to the biggest monopolies at the expense of the workers, the Negro, Puerto Rican and Mexican-American peoples, the small farmers and small businessmen.” [18•3

p Government measures during both Democratic and Republican administrations undertaken in accordance with recommendations coming directly from monopoly groups 19 have been aimed at ensuring additional privileges to big capital. Sonic of the major steps taken were to increase equipment depreciation allowances, reduce corporate taxes, establish a “partnership” in the fields of atomic energy and space communications, provide for subsidies and grants to various companies, grant billion dollar subsidies to large farmer-capitalists to support prices on agricultural products, etc.

p The basic channel through which, with government help, unprecedented profits flow to the leading monopolies is that of defence orders, made against a background of an unrestrained arms race and the militarisation of the entire American society. As pointed out in the Programme of the CPSU, "state-monopoly capitalism stimulates militarism to an unheard-of degree. The imperialist countries maintain immense armed forces even in peacetime. Military expenditures devour an ever-growing portion of the state budgets. The imperialist countries are turning into militaristic, military-police states. Militarisation pervades the life of bourgeois society.” [19•1 This characterisation of the imperialist states is especially applicable to the USA, where the government’s involvement in the country’s economy is predominantly of a militaristic nature.

p The post-war period saw a steady growth in the militarisation of the US economy through which monopoly capital strove to strengthen the capitalist economic system and guarantee high profits for itself. In recent years, the growing power of giant military-industrial corporations and their enormous influence not only on the economic but also on the political life of the country have assumed such dangerous proportions that even some spokesmen of the ruling circles have been forced to voice their anxiety.

p Notable in this connection was former President Dwight Eisenhower’s statement made on nationwide television on January 17, 1961, that "American democracy" was being threatened by a new enormous force—the military-industrial complex. "The total influence—" Eisenhower said, " economic, political, even spiritual—is felt in every city, every state house, every office of the federal government. . .. We must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, 20 whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. . . ." [20•1 This statement by a former president and general and obedient servant of big business shows how far the merger of government and monopoly power has gone and how deeply militarism has entrenched itself in the country.

The power and influence of the American military– industrial complex steadily increased in the 1960s, as evidenced by statistics on direct military spending. [20•2

Fiscal Year Direct Defence Spending (million dollars) 1961 47,383 1962 51,097 1963 52,257 1964 53,591 1965 49,578 1966 56,785 1967 70,081 1968 80,516 1969 81,240 1970 (est.) 79,432

p As can be seen from the table above, the US Department of Defence budget has shown a sharp increase in recent years. But it should be borne in mind that the government does not include in the category of "defence spending" any appropriation for the needs of the

Atomic Energy Commission or the space programme, which are of a sharply expressed military character. If we take these portions of the budget for the 1970 fiscal year into account, the total sum allotted for military purposes and for programmes connected with them amounted to $84,300 million (approximately 43 per cent of the expenditure part of the federal budget).

p The US military machine has grown to gigantic proportions. In 1961, material property at the Pentagon's disposal was valued at $164,800 million; by 1970, this figure had reached $200,000 million, which amounted to over one half of all US Government property both within and outside the country. [20•3 Land placed at the disposal of the US Defence Department exceeds the combined areas of the states of Rhode 21 Island, Delaware, Connecticut, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Maryland, Vermont and New Hampshire. The Pentagon purchases almost 15 per cent of the industrial goods produced in the USA. The US Government buys for "defence" needs the greater part of the country's output of missiles, communications equipment, electronic and other instruments and devices, ships, etc.

p The 1960s were unprecedented boom years for corporations specialising in armaments production. Government armaments contracts almost doubled between 1960 and 1969 (from $22,500 million to $42,300 million), [21•1 with the lion's share of defence orders going to a small group of the bigger corporations. The Pentagon annually concludes about 2,500,000 contracts with about 18,000 American corporations. About one-third of these, as a rule, fall into the hands of the ten leading armaments monopolies. [21•2

p The extent to which defence orders are profitable for the monopolies can be seen from the fact that for many years the average rate of profit of the 15 corporations, which according to Defence Department figures are the basic producers of military goods for the government, substantially exceeded the rate of profit of the country's 500 largest industrial corporations. [21•3 In 1968, for example, the profits of the arms suppliers were approximately 70 per cent higher than the average profits of other types of companies. [21•4 Between 1964 and 1966, according to figures compiled by progressive American economist Victor Perlo, industrial corporation profits showed an increase of $10,000 million, or 25.8 per cent, while the profits of industries producing for the war in Vietnam during that same period went up by 56 to 176 per cent. [21•5 An official government study of Defence 22 Department contracts with 146 firms showed that some of the companies involved, particularly those filling orders for ammunition and aircraft and missile equipment (for the war in Vietnam) made profits as high as 240 per cent. [22•1

p Heading the list of corporations getting fat on the dirty war against the people of Vietnam is General Dynamics. In the fiscal year of 1968 it received orders totalling $2,239 million for the production of military aircraft, atomic assault submarines, various kinds of missiles and other armaments for the US armed forces; in 1964, it had contracts amounting to a total of $1,455 million. [22•2

p Number two on the list is Lockheed Aircraft, whose orders for fighter aircraft, jet cargo planes, missiles, warships and other armaments amounted to $1,870 million in 1968, or $883 million more than in 1964. [22•3

p Along with the corporations specialising in armaments, many other monopolies that had formerly operated almost exclusively in the sphere of civilian production have also cashed in on the arms race programme and particularly on the war in Vietnam. Thus, the country's biggest corporation, American Telephone and Telegraph, recorded $776 million worth of orders in 1968, taking sixth place among the corporations filling Pentagon orders; Textron's orders amounted to $501 million, and Ford Motor's—$381 million. [22•4

p Escalation of the war in Vietnam and increased military spending was accompanied by a marked reduction in budget allocations for civilian needs. As it sought additional money for military needs, the US Government annually reduced the federal budget allocations for public health, education, social welfare, transportation, etc., economising primarily by cutting appropriations for social programmes designed to alleviate the situation of the working people.

p The unrestrained increase in military spending accelerates the further strengthening of the monopolies' positions and enhances their power and control over the country's entire economic and political life. At the same time, the arms race 23 ultimately has a negative effect on the overall condition of the economy as it gives rise to inflation, devaluation of the dollar, a higher and higher cost of living, a dangerous increase in the national debt and a balance of payments deficit.

The militaristic fever which has been consuming enormous resources impinges above all on the interests of the working people and exposes the demagogy of the high-sounding social programmes that have been announced to the American people by their government in recent years. As a consequence, noted the well-known American columnist, Walter Lippmann, social contradictions have come to the fore all the more noticeably and conflicts between labour and capital have become aggravated, "The surpluses of an expanding economy," Lippmann said, "have been swallowed up and this has removed the lubricants and the cushions against the conflicts of the interests and the rivalry of ideologies. We are moving more and more into sharp and raw confrontations. This is the tragic consequence of one of the most serious miscalculations in our history." [23•1

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TEXT SIZE

Notes

[9•1] Calculated according to *Fortune*, Inly 1963, pp. 178–80; August 1963, pp. 140–50; luly 15, 1966, pp. 232–60; June 15, 1968, pp. 188–217; May 1971, pp. 172–201.

[9•2] *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1968, p. 444; *Fortune*, June 15, 1968, p. 208.

[10•1] *Fortune*, August 1961, p. 132; May 1971, p. 192.

[10•2] *Political Affairs*, February 1969, p. 46.

[10•3] *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1967, p. 492.

[11•1] *The American Fcdcralionisl*, August 1970, p. 1.

[11•2] Ibid., May 1969, p. 10.

[11•3] *Political Affairs*, November 1966, p. 53.

[11•4] *The New Republic*, August 13, 1966, p. 19.

[12•1] *Fortune*, July 15, 1966, pp.

232–36; August 1966, pp. 148–51.

[12•2] Richard J. Barber, *The American Corporation. Its Power, Its Money, Its Politics*, New

York, E. P. Button and Co., 1970, pp. 7-8.

[12•3] *UAW Washington Report*, October 26, 1970.

[13•1] *New Program of the Communist Party, USA*, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1970, p. 17.

[13•2] *The American Federationist*, May 1969, p. 10.

[13•3] *Fortune*, July 15, 1966, p. 2.

[14•1] *Labour*, July 5, 1969.

[14•2] *Political Affairs*, August 1964, p. 62.

[14•3] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 224.

[14•4] *Financial Times*, April 8, 1969.

[14•5] International Telephone & Telegraph Annual Report, 1968, p. 5; *The New Republic*, February 22, 1969, p. 15.

[15•1] *Monthly Review*, April 1966, pp. 49–50.

[15•2] *Financial 'Times*, April 8, 1969.

[15•3] *'flic New Republic*, February 22, 1969, p. 14.

[16•1] *Economic Notes*, April 1967, p. 4; February 1969, p. 10; *Fortune*, July 1961, p. 184; June 15, 1968, p. 204.

[16•2] *Fortune*, May 1971, p. 171.

[16•3] Ibid., pp. 172–78.

[16•4] *Proceedings. Twenty-Second Constitutional Convention. International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)*, April 20–24, 1970, Atlantic Git/, New Jersey, p. 27.

[17•1] *The International Teamster*, December 1964, p. 30.

[17•2] Ferdinand Lundberg, *The Rich and Super-Rich*, New York, 1968, p. 203.

[18•1] *Fortune*, June 15, 1967, p. 180.

[18•2] *Problems of Present-Day Imperialism*, Moscow, 1968, p. 45 (in Russian).

[18•3] Gus Hall, *For a Radical Change—the Communist View*. (Report and Concluding Remarks to the 18th National Convention, Communist Party, USA, June 22–26, 1966, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1966, p. 18.)

[19•1] *The Roud to Communism*, Part I, Moscow, p. 474.

[20•1] D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace. 1956–1961*, New York, 1965, p. 616.

[20•2] *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1070, p. 247.

[20•3] *Congressional Record*, July 24, 1970, p. Si2090.

[21•1] *US News & World Report*, April 21, 1969, p. 61.

[21•2] In 1968, for example, 100 big corporations handled nearly twothirds (67.4 per cent) of the country's entire defence production, with ten of these accounting for one-third of this total output (*The New York Times Magazine*, November 16, 1969).

[21•3] Victor Perlo, *Militarism and Industry. Arms Profiteering in the Missile Age*, International Publishers, New York, 1963, p. 32.

[21•4] William McGaffin and Erwin Knoll, *Scandal in the Pentagon. A Challenge to Democracy*, Greenwich, Conn., Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1969, p. 16.

[21•5] Victor Perlo, *The Vietnam Profiteers*, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1966, p. 29.

[22•1] *The New York Times*, March 18, 1971.

[22•2] *US News & World Re/tort*, April 21, 1969, p. 63; *Labor Fact Book*, No. 17, p. 58.

[22•3] Ibid.

[22•4] *US News & World Report*, April 21, 1969, p. 63.

[23•1] *World Journal Tribune*, December 29, 1966.

INTENSIFIED EXPLOITATION OF THE WORKING MAN

p The past decade saw the steadily intensified exploitation of the American working people. In its efforts to extract maximum profits, make American goods more competitive on the world markets and continue the arms race, monopoly capital has trodden heavily on the vital interests of the working class and all strata of working people in America.

p At the same time, the monopolists use their propaganda machine to cover up the growing social contrasts and class antagonisms in present-day America. The relatively high standard of living enjoyed by the working people of the USA, as compared with other capitalist countries—won as a result of many years of persistent struggle by the working class—is proclaimed by the ideologists of the monopoly bourgeoisie to be the consequence of capitalism's " philanthropic mission", the result of the transformation of a bourgeois country into a "welfare state".

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p Thus, proponents of the socio-demagogic theory of the "welfare state",—Alvin Hansen, M. Reder, Simon Kuznets, L. O. Kelso, M. J. Adler and many others—contend that in the last decades, allegedly as a result of a modernisation of the capitalist society, the standard of living of the population has been lifted "to undreamed-of levels of comfort and luxury", a "high standard of living for all households has become a morally approved objective", and "mass poverty has largely been wiped out". [24•1 All this, these writers say, is the result of the fact that the US Government is engaged primarily in the redistribution of income in favour of the working people and does everything to promote their greater welfare and prosperity. Manipulating average standard-of-living indicators, those who advance such theories deliberately, and for quite understandable reasons, ignore the fact that so-called "prosperity" and "affluence" are in no way applicable to large categories of low-paid wage earners, to the huge army of the unemployed, to indigent agricultural workers, or to working people living in the country's poverty regions.

p The facts of real life expose the falsity of any talk about "universal prosperity" under the present socio-economic system and force even the US Government to admit the existence of mass poverty.

p The ways and means by which the mighty monopolies intensify exploitation are varied. They include production automation and modernisation, layoffs and increasing labour intensification, reduction of highly paid jobs, rising taxes and prices and reduction of the working people's real incomes, curtailing spending on social welfare and social insurance, infringing on the working people's right to strike, etc. The working people's

situation has observably worsened in recent years as a result of this fresh onslaught against their rights by big business.

p The most acute problem in the USA after the Second World War has been unemployment, which has become an inseparable part of the "American way of life". "The 25 bourgeois myth of 'full employment' has proved to be sheer mockery," the Programme of the CPSU has pointed out, "for the working class is suffering continuously from mass unemployment and insecurity." [25•1

The dynamics of unemployment may be seen in the following table. [25•2

Year Gainfully employed population (mil. people) Number of unemployed (mil. people) Unemployment, per cent of gainfully employed 1947 59.4 2 3 3.9 1948 60.6 2.3 3.8 1949 61.3 3.6 5.9 1950 62.2 3.3 5.3 1951 62.0 2.0 3.3 1952 62.1 1.9 3.0 1953 63.0 1.8 2.9 1954 63.6 3.5 5 5 1955 65.0 2.9 4.4 1956 66.6 2.8 4.1 1957 66.9 2.9 4.3 1958 67.6 4.6 6.8 1959 68.4 . 3.7 5.5 1960 69.6 3.9 5.5 1961 70.4 4.7 6.7 1962 70.6 3.9 5.5 1963 71.8 4.1 5.7 1964 73.1 3.8 5.2 1965 74.5 3.4 4.5 1966 75.8 2.9 3.8 1967 77.3 3.0 3.8 1968 78.7 2.8 3.6 1969 80.7 2.8 3.5 1970 82.7 4.1 4.9

p The data presented above show that there has been no clearly defined tendency towards a drop in unemployment, either in absolute figures or in the percentage of gainfully employed.

p A characteristic feature of the US unemployment picture after the Second World War was that after each recession the number of unemployed grew, and even officially 26 proclaimed economic "prosperity" did not bring unemployment down to the level prior to the recession. The number of unemployed in 1952–1953 was 1.8 million (2.9 per cent of the gainfully employed population); after the crisis of 1953– 1954, it stood at 2.9 million (4.4 per cent). After the 1957– 1958 recession, the "backbone" of unemployment grew even more—to 3.7 million people (5.5 per cent), and in another two years, following the crisis of 1960–1961, it jumped to 4 million people (5.7 per cent). In early January 1961, the Kennedy Administration promised to reduce unemployment from 6.6 to 4 per cent. Despite the fact that unemployment did drop over the next few years, it remained considerably above the promised level throughout the period in which the New Frontiers course was being followed.

p President Johnson admitted in early 1965, that unemployment was still the number one problem. Between 1965 and 1969, unemployment dropped below the 5 per cent level for the first time since 1957. But despite the relatively higher level of employment, the actual number of unemployed in the 1961–1968 period averaged 3.6 million persons, compared to an average of 3.3 million between 1953 and 1960. The somewhat higher employment since 1965 was primarily the result of an increase in the size of the armed forces and the sharp increase in military orders connected with the escalation of the Vietnam war.

p In 1964, the armed forces personnel numbered 2.7 million men, while in 1968, this figure went up to 3.5 million, [26•1 an increase of 29.6 per cent. Analysing the effect of

the Vietnam war on the US economy, *Business Week* magazine wrote the following in October 1966: "In labour markets, Vietnam is soaking up additions to manpower at a remarkable clip. The number of men over 20 either working or seeking work has held level over the past 12 months. At the same time, the armed forces have taken over 40 per cent of the total increase in workers ... so far this year." [26•2

p Defence industries as well as the armed forces themselves require more and more new workers. From July 1965 through October 1966, the aircraft industry increased its labour force 27 by 32 per cent, the communications industry (producing primarily for the Defence Department) by 16 per cent, the arms manufacturing industry—by 35 per cent. [27•1 On the whole, the number of people working in war production between 1963 and 1968 grew from 2.4 million to 5.4 million. According to official figures for 1968, the total number of persons employed in "defence" production and in the armed forces was approximately 9 million, or more than 11 per cent of the gainfully employed population. [27•2 In mid-1969, the situation on the labour market began to take a sharp turn for the worse as a result of the onset of another recession. Cutbacks in production, increased under-capacity operations and total shutdowns in a number of industries aggravated the employment problem. During 1970, unemployment went up 58 per cent, from 3.1 million to 4.9 million, and the average unemployment rate for the year was 4.9 per cent, as compared with 3.5 per cent in 1969. [27•3 According to Department of Labour figures, the number of unemployed went up to 6 per cent in December 1970, and to 6.2 per cent in May 1971. Unemployment had reached the highest level since the December 1961 recession. [27•4

p A characteristic feature of the unemployment picture for 1969–1971 was that workers in all skill categories were hit, as well as office workers, engineers and scientific specialists. The number of unemployed white collar workers in early 1971 grew to 3.7 per cent, the highest level in the 13 years since separate statistics for this category of workers have been kept. [27•5

p Hardest hit, however, were workers directly involved in material production. There was a noticeable drop in the number of industrial workers employed in the ferrous metal, chemical, rubber, machine building, automobile and aircraft, and radio and electronics industries. By the end of 1970, the per cent of "redundant people" among industrial workers was 1.5 times higher than the average in the country, and among construction workers, it was 2.3 times higher.

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p It should be remembered, however, that government figures considerably understate the real scope of unemployment. Official statistics deliberately ignore many important factors without which the real picture of unemployment turns out markedly distorted. In a *Saturday Evening Post* article, American sociologist Ben Bagdikian showed how the real extent of unemployment is underestimated.

p “The national statistics on the jobless,” explained Bagdikian, "come from a monthly questioning of 35,000 households in 701 counties. The 550 interviewers for the Bureau of the Census are under strict orders to stick to the precise wording of their questionnaire. For every person over 14 who is not in school or disabled, there are two crucial questions:

p “1. ’Did you do any work at all last week, not counting work around the house?’

p “If the answer is ‘No’, the next question is:

p “2. ’Were you looking for work?’

p “If the answer is ‘Yes’, the person is counted as unemployed in the statistics.

p “If by ‘looking’ he thinks the questionnaire meant physically active in a search, or if he gave up looking during the week, then he answers ‘No’, and he is not counted.

p “The President’s Council of Economic Advisers thinks there are ’a million or more’ who . . . are out of work and wish to work but who don’t get into the statistics.” [28•1

p Such methods of counting the unemployed, say the authors of a manifesto put out by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Triple Revolution, "ignore the fact that many men and women who would like to find jobs have not looked for them because they know there are no employment opportunities. Underestimates for this reason are pervasive among groups whose unemployment rates are high—the young, the old and racial minorities.” [28•2

p A special study carried out by the Department of Labour in 1966 showed that in the slums of large US cities alone there are about 150,000 blacks between the ages of 25 and 64 who are not registered as jobless. Having lost all hope 29 of finding any kind ol a job, they have simply stopped looking. [29•1

p US statistics do not take into account the partially unemployed, nor anyone who had a temporary job for as little as one hour in the course of a week. Yet, in 1965, for example, the number of people working from 1 to 14 hours a week never went below the 3 million mark. According to the figures for February 1966, approximately 25 per cent of the working people in the United States were working less than 40 hours a week, and 6.4 per cent of them were working less than 14 hours a week. None of these people were reflected in the unemployment statistics.

p Despite the fact that unemployment in the country is obviously underestimated, the US monopoly circles, and above all the National Association of Manufacturers, have in recent years launched a campaign to re-examine the current method of measuring unemployment, contending that it has "steadily been altered to magnify the unemployment problem" [29•2 and "distorts the actual condition". [29•3

p Heeding this criticism, the Kennedy Administration attempted to find an automatic “solution” to the unemployment problem by changing the existing methods of measurement. [29•4 However, a government committee composed of six wellknown economists charged with determining whether official statistics overestimate the real scope of unemployment came to exactly the opposite conclusion. Their report, "Measuring Employment and Unemployment”, submitted to the government in the fall of 1962, pointed out that in many instances official figures underestimate the level of unemployment, sometimes by as much as 40 per cent. The committee’s report noted, for example, that in February 1961, 940,000 persons were registered as, employed on the basis that they had worked from one to four hours during the week covered in the survey. [29•5

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p The extent to which actual unemployment goes higher than rellceted in official government statistics can be seen from the following. Department of Labour figures for 1962 showed the average number of unemployed for the year to be slightly less than 4 million. But if we take into account the time lost by the 2.3 million people not working a full week and the 700,000 jobless who were not looking for work because it was hopeless to find it, then the real number of unemployed would have stood at 5.7 million, or 40 per cent higher than indicated in Department of Labour reports. [30•1 A similar calculation made in 1965 by the California State Department of Finance showed that the state’s unemployment level was 11.7 per cent, that is, over twice as high as indicated by the official Department of Labour figures for California. [30•2 Nation-wide, this would indicate that in the spring of 1965 there were 6 million and not 3 million unemployed in the United States.

p It has been repeatedly proclaimed in official statements by Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon that the government’s goal is to "abolish unemployment" and to "achieve full employment”. Just what the ruling circles of America mean by these terms, however, is quite vague. Unemployment, we all know, is a "condition of existence of the capitalist mode of production”, [30•3 and to actually abolish it would by no means be in the interests of the monopoly bourgeoisie. Under the capitalist system, therefore, the "struggle for full employment" is aimed only at somewhat reducing the acuteness of unemployment, at preventing it from turning into an explosive social problem, but at the same time keeping it at a level high enough to fulfil the function of providing a reserve army of labour.

p Many US, economists who reflect the monopolies’ interest in having a permanent army of unemployed frankly state that the government should not strive to wipe it out completely. According to Columbia University Professor Arthur F. Burns, who was appointed by President Nixon to be President of the Federal Reserve Board, the absence of 31 unemploymcnt would be undesirable lor the society since it would limit the freedom of the labour force and the employers’ opportunity to select workers.

p Quite typical also is the assertion made by Joseph M. Becker, William Haber and Sar A. Levitan of the Upjohn Institute for Employment Research that unemployment is a consequence of the capitalist system's "progressive" nature. "... It would, of course, be preferable to prevent unemployment entirely," wrote Becker, Haber and Levitan in their joint study. "But for several reasons a modern industrial society must realistically expect to experience some unemployment at all times and must be prepared for occasional heavy unemployment. First of all, the task of preventing unemployment is enormously complex—involving, as it does, all major economic, political, and educational activities— and it is simply beyond our power to perform the task perfectly. Furthermore, the economy of the United States is characterised by a high degree of dynamic change, the inevitable concomitant of progress and of freedom. Both characteristics make for some unemployment, more unemployment than if our society were less progressive and less free." [31•1

p Many American economists think along these lines. However, there is some disagreement as to the "acceptable level" of unemployment at which "full employment" may be considered to have been reached. Professor Joel Seidman, for example, feels that the figure should be 2 per cent, [31•2 while eminent economist Milton Friedman, who is close to the leading circles of the Republican Party (he was the chief economics adviser during Goldwater's presidential campaign in 1964, and in Nixon's 1968 campaign), pushed the " acceptable level" of unemployment to 5.5 per cent. [31•3 The prevailing opinion among American economists, however, is that full 32 employment will have been achieved ii the number of unemployed stands at 4 per eent of the country's work force. Many supporters of this completely groundless criterion (for example, University of Chicago Professor Albert Rees) allow for the possibility that "full employment" may in the future be compatible with an even higher rate of unemployment, since "demographic changes in the years ahead will make a 4 per cent rate increasingly difficult to attain." [32•1

p Analogous thinking underlies the economic policy of the US Government. In the 1950s, government circles felt that if the rate of unemployment did not go over 2 per cent, this could be considered as "full employment"; in 1961, this " acceptable" limit was raised to 4 per cent. [32•2

p This latter rate was also officially proclaimed as " acceptable" by the Republican Administration in 1969. [32•3 In 1970– 1971, however, when unemployment figures soared (as a direct result of President Nixon's economic policy which had programmed in a growth of unemployment as an " inevitable" consequence of anti-inflationary measures), the Republican Administration discarded its previously held theory that an unemployment rate of 4 per cent is "the equivalent of full employment in a prosperous economy". This widely accepted view, said Secretary of Commerce John Connally in July 1971, was a "myth", "and such a rate had never been achieved in the past 25 years except in war". [32•4

p Obviously, then, a definite and moreover a sizeable rate of unemployment in the United States is considered not only normal, but necessary, since it creates additional possibilities for the monopolies to enrich themselves and is a means of eroding the standard of living of the working class and its gains. For the working class, however, and all working people, unemployment means deprivation, hopelessness and immeasurable suffering.

p Unemployment as a grave social problem in the 1960s was characterised not only by its continuously high rate, but by its protractedness. Over a period of several years about half of the long-term unemployed were jobless for 27 or more weeks. [33•1 According to data compiled by New York University Professor Daniel E. Diamond, unemployment went up 40 per cent between 1957 and 1962, while the number of people out of work for 15 weeks or more increased 100 per cent, and the number of those without work for six months or more went up 150 per cent. [33•2 In the period from April 1970 through April 1971, however, the number of unemployed for 5 to 14 weeks increased by 45 per cent, and the number of jobless for 15 weeks or more showed an increase of 105 per cent. [33•3

p A major factor negatively affecting the employment situation over recent years has been technological and economic advances in US industrial production and, above all, the widespread introduction of automation. "Improvement in technology, signifying increased labour productivity and greater social wealth," Lenin wrote, "becomes in bourgeois society the cause of greater social inequality, of widening gulfs between the rich and poor, of greater insecurity, unemployment, and various hardships of the mass of the working people." [33•4 The past 15 years have provided fresh evidence of the hardships that technological progress imposes on the working class in a society dominated by monopoly capital. Automation cuts down on jobs available in a number of industries, ousting workers from the sphere of production; 34 moreover, it affects not only industrial workers, but increasingly penetrates into the realm of office work, the banking business, transportation, etc.

p According to government estimates, automation weekly deprives approximately 35,000 people of their jobs, which amounts to 1,820,000 people a year. [34•1 Other figures, cited at the Fifth Constitutional Convention of the AFL-CIO, show that not less than 51,000 jobs are abolished weekly due to automation. [34•2 "And while figures on how much joblessness automation actually creates are the subject of much debate," remarked *Newsweek* magazine, "the peril is very real for those who lose their livelihood to a machine.... Automation is becoming the most controversial economic concept of the age. Businessmen love it. Workers fear it." [34•3

p Widespread introduction of new machinery and automation tends to break down former division of labour patterns; it makes many job categories obsolete and thus reduces the rate of employment in the older industries. Many parts of the country where traditional industries had been concentrated have become areas of chronic depression and unemployment.

p The impact that technological progress has had on the employment rate is most clearly seen in the industries to which automation came first. President of the United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America Walter Reuther cited the following facts in this connection at the 19th UAW Constitutional Convention. Between 1947 and 1963, auto production in the USA went up from 4.8 million to 9.1 million, that is, an 89.6 per cent increase. The number of workers employed in the auto industry during the same period, however, dropped from 626,000 to 572,000, i.e., by 8.6 per cent. [34•4

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p The introduction of automation and other technological improvements has also resulted in a sharp decline in the number of workers in the steel industry—from 625,000 in 1955 to 486,000 at the close of 1962. [35•1 In the textile industry, the work force was cut by 310,000 persons between 1950 and 1964. [35•2 The coal mining industry employed 600,000 workers in 1947; by the end of 1966, it had 100,000 workers, while the hourly output of coal had doubled. [35•3 The work force on the country's railroads was more than halved—from 1,400,000 in 1947 to 620,000 in 1967, with a significant increase in the volume of work done per man-hour. [35•4

p Between 1957 and 1962, over 80,000 communications workers and office employees were laid off, despite the rapid development in that industry. [35•5 The unemployment rate among office workers has risen steadily since 1957; it went up from 2.8 per cent in 1957 to 4.6 per cent in January 1962—which amounts to over 466,000 persons. [35•6 Similar changes have taken place in other sectors. An especially significant drop in employment has taken place in agriculture.

p Another result of structural changes in industry is a growing unevenness in joblessness among the various worker categories. Hardest hit are the unskilled and semi-skilled workers; the unemployment rate in these categories exceeds the overall average by two times and almost by one-third, respectively. An analysis of the US employment structure shows that while there is a multimillion-strong army of unemployed, industry has a constant need for skilled workers and specialists in certain definite fields. "The result is a paradox," wrote the magazine *US News & World Report* in 1968, "unemployed by the millions while jobs go begging." [35•7 In his economic report to Congress in 1967, 36 President Johnson had to admit that the coexistence of vacant jobs and unemployed workers incapable of filling them is a bitter human tragedy and an unforgivable economic waste. [36•1

p The structural changes in industry brought about by automation aggravate the already grievous situation of those segments of the US population that are hired to an only insignificant extent for jobs requiring skills. This applies above all to the black population and to youth.

p For many years the unemployment rate among blacks has been over twice as high as among whites. The situation is even worse among those unemployed for long periods of

time. Between 1960 and 1962, black people made up from 20 to 28 per cent of all Americans out of work for over 15 weeks. At the same time, they comprised only 11 per cent of the total number of employed. [36•2

p The average figures on unemployment among the black population are imposing in and of themselves; however, the situation in the poverty regions and the big city slums is catastrophic. Bureau of Labour Statistics data have indicated that at the beginning of 1971, unemployment among the black population in the poorest districts of 100 large US cities was 11.3 per cent. [36•3 The situation of the Puerto Ricans, Mexicans and Indians is just as grievous. The unemployment rate for Indians on reservations fluctuates between 40 and 50 per cent. [36•4

The working youth of America also faces difficult problems. The fact that most young men and women have no special training and the fact that the demand for unskilled labour is steadily falling puts the country's youth in an extremely difficult situation. The unemployment rate among young people has been for many years significantly higher than the unemployment rate among other categories of working people. US Department of Labour statistics bear this out clearly.

37 *Rate of Unemployment Among US Youth, 1967* [37•1 (as a percentage of total labour force) Age and sex Total United States Urban poverty neighbourhoods Total 3 8 6.8 Men 3.1 6.2 16–19 years old 20–24 years old 25 and over . . . 12.3 4.7 2 0 23.5 7.5 4.3 Women . . 5 2 7.7 16–19 years old 13 5 23.5 20–24 years old 7.0 10 1 25 and over 3 7 5 3

p The number of jobless youth reaches dangerous proportions during periods of seasonal fluctuations in the work force, particularly when every new batch of high school graduates hits the labour market. In the spring of 1965, for example, according to the then Secretary of Labour Willard Wirtz, of the 4.2 million unemployed in the country, 2.2 million, or over half, were between the ages of 16 and 21. [37•2

p However, even these figures do not fully reflect the tragedy afflicting the young. A Department of Labour report published in 1964 admitted that unemployment among teenagers was significantly underestimated. To the 1.2 million officially registered as unemployed in 1963, for example, another 350,000 should be added to include those young people who were not actively seeking work, plus another 350,000 who were partially unemployed. [37•3 Joblessness among youth also seriously affects the financial position of these families: figures for March 1964 showed that 500,000 teenagers were the primary earners in their families, and 200,000 were the heads of families. The annual family incomes of these two groups were extremely low—less than $2,200 on the average, as compared with a national average of $6,200. [37•4

p In extremely desperate straits are the nation's young black people. Although blacks make up only 15 per cent of the 38 country's youth between the ages of 16 and 21, 30 to 50 per cent of them are not going to school or working. A special nation-wide survey has

shown that in some areas the unemployment rate among black youth reaches 60 to 80 per cent. [38•1

p The steadily high rate of unemployment among youth is cause for increasing alarm in the United States. "We waste more than a million kids a year," said Judge Mary Conway Kohler of the San Francisco Juvenile Court. "As we once wasted natural gas and forests and topsoil, today we waste our most valuable natural resource—the productive power of young brains and muscles, the creative power of young imaginations and emotions. We waste them because we neither keep them in schools nor give them jobs." [38•2

p A President's Committee on Youth Employment, appointed by President Kennedy to work out recommendations, said in its report: "To hundreds of thousands of boys and girls between 16 and 21, the problem is immediate and desperate.... Other hundreds of thousands of boys and girls can look forward only to lives of drudgery and intermittent work.... For them the outlook is bleak. Life is empty, with survival the only incentive." [38•3

p Some American researchers say that unemployment may present an even more alarming problem in the near future. The deteriorating economic situation will bring out even more sharply those social consequences of scientific and technological progress that adversely affect the working people. At the same time, automation will be developed even further, knocking new segments of the working class out of production and reducing the demand for labour power. By the mid-1960s, wrote the *Wall Street Journal*, automation had reached only 10 per cent of its potential capacity; in the next ten years, the level of automation in US production will go up to 30 per cent. [38•4

p Aware of the increasing anxiety among the working people over the consequences of the broad introduction of automation and other technological innovations into production and 39 fearing further aggravation of class tensions throughout the country, the US Government was forced to admit the gravity of this burning problem. Automation, declared President Kennedy in February 1962, is a very serious problem and is "the major domestic challenge of the 1960s". [39•1 Responding to demands for decisive measures aimed at abolishing mass unemployment, the Kennedy and then the Johnson administrations undertook a number of legislative measures, among which the following may be singled out: the 1961 Area Redevelopment Act; the 1962 Manpower Development and Training Act, supplemented in December 1963, and extended in April 1965 to 1968; the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act; and a programme of legislative measures aimed at achieving the so-called Great Society.

p The major emphasis in the above legislation was on manpower training and retraining. There were increased appropriations for new job training for workers who had lost their jobs as a result of automation; vocational training with a minimum wage stipend was introduced for certain categories of men—heads of families and unemployed youth between 19 and 21 years of age—as well as vocational training in public high schools and some other educational institutions; so-called Youth Corps were organised to work in nature conservation camps; special job placement centres for youth were set up, etc.

p Underlying these government programmes was the notion that all unemployed or semi-unemployed workers could count on finding jobs once they had the necessary training. It is apparent, however, that neither improvements in the educational system nor intensified manpower retraining programmes can create new jobs and thus solve the unemployment problem rooted in the capitalist economy itself.

p Although the measures undertaken by the Democratic Administration were a step forward compared to what was done in this direction by the Eisenhower Administration, they were still essentially limited and brought about no radical changes in the system of vocation or general education. Funds earmarked for these goals were clearly insufficient; by far not all unemployed could go through a retraining 40 programme, and most of those who could, again faced the unsolved problem of where to find a job.

p Speaking at Brown University on April 6, 1965, George Meany said that it was impossible to solve the automation and unemployment problem through training and education alone. Without a broad economic policy aimed at solving basic economic problems, that is, without a policy for creating jobs, he said, training and education will merely result in the unemployed being better trained and better educated.

p The following are some examples of how some retraining programmes actually worked. Of the 431 workers laid off by the Armour meat packaging company in Oklahoma, only 60 were selected for a retraining course. However, only 20 of the 58 workers who completed the course were able to find jobs in their new field. [40•1 At the same company's Fort Worth plant, 165 of 650 laidoff workers were accepted for retraining. Of these, 117 completed the course, but only 41 could find jobs. [40•2 Criticising a similar programme of "assistance" to the unemployed, President of the International Typographical Union Elmer Brown said in December 1964 that there was no justification for training workers in skills for which there are no job vacancies as this leads to an even greater overproduction of labour power. [40•3

p Other planned measures for job training or retraining, the youth programmes in particular, have upon implementation met with no better success. The programmes, limited in scope and ineffective in their results, became targets for sharp criticism in the country. *The New York Times*, for example, wrote in December 1964: "Some of the job programmes have met with shallow success, and some have produced cynicism, not excitement, in the people they were designed to serve." [40•4

p Increasingly trenchant criticism has been levelled in recent years at the present unemployment insurance system. Laws providing for unemployment insurance benefits, enacted back in the 1930s after persistent struggle by the American 41 working class, are extremely limited and fail to provide any substantial guarantee against unemployment. "The low incomes of the unemployed," wrote *The Nation* in June 1965, "are attributable in part to low unemployment insurance benefits and the limited duration of those benefits." The magazine noted further that ". .. large numbers of unemployed persons cannot qualify for any type of public income maintenance payments." [41•1

p The existing unemployment insurance system is extremely complicated and confusing. It is governed by laws of the separate states and, in essence, consists of 50 systems, differing from state to state and without national standards. Despite persistent demands by labour unions, the Federal Government has not re-examined the unemployment insurance system for many years, while in the meantime, endless amendments to the state laws have set up many new barriers and limitations.

Not all categories of workers come under the unemployment insurance system. In 1966, for example, while 54.7 million persons were entitled to benefits in the event of unemployment, 16.3 million, or nearly a quarter of all wage workers were not covered by any kind of unemployment insurance. [41•2 Yet the people in these excluded categories (agricultural workers, domestic servants, employees of small firms, etc.) are the ones who are in special need of assistance.

Unemployment Insurance Coverage of Wage and Salary Workers for 1966 [41•3 (in million persons) Covered..... 54.7 Not covered..... 16.3 *Including*: State and local government..... 7.8 Domestic service..... 2.5 Farm and agricultural processing..... !'> Small firms..... 1-8 Nonprofit institutions..... 2.3 Others..... 0-3 42

p A worker's being covered by unemployment insurance does not necessarily mean that he will actually receive the insurance benefits if he loses his job. There are always a number of other stipulations besides being out of work that must be met. A laidoff worker must supply evidence that he did not quit of his own volition; that he lost his job for "valid" reasons, and not because of "misdemeanors"; that his state employment agency where he is obliged to register cannot offer him any kind of work. In addition, the unemployed person must supply a detailed description of what he did during the given week to find work, list, for subsequent verification, the addresses and telephone numbers of employers to whom he applied for work, etc. Non-compliance with any of these conditions is sufficient grounds for being denied unemployment benefits.

Because of the existing restrictions, year in and year out less than half of the fully unemployed throughout the country receive unemployment insurance benefits.

Fully Unemployed Not Receiving Unemployment Insurance Benefits, 1957–1966 [42•1 1957 1958 1959 1960 1961 (in per cent) 52 45 53 52 53 1962 1963 1964 1965 1966 60 58 61 61 65

p According to data published in January 1969, the duration of unemployment insurance benefits varies from 22 to 39 weeks, depending on the state, and in most states (41) the limit is 26 weeks. [42•2 Since the country is afflicted with chronic unemployment, such periods are obviously too short, for many unemployed persons lose their right to benefits long before they find work. In 1967, for example, 19 per cent of the unemployed had stopped receiving benefits even though they had not yet found a job. [42•3

p The existing unemployment insurance system fails to satisfy the needs of the unemployed, since the average size of the benefits falls far short of the subsistence minimum as determined by the government. In 1964, 34 states had a minimum weekly benefit of $10 and a maximum of $35 to $55. [43•1 In 1965, the average weekly unemployment insurance benefits received by unemployed persons amounted to 35 per cent of their normal wages, whereas in the 1930s this figure stood at 50 per cent. [43•2 It is noteworthy that the states with the lowest wage levels had the lowest benefit rates.

p In May 1965, Congress considered a bill revising the unemployment insurance system and, in particular, re– establishing the benefit rate of 50 per cent of the workers' wages that had existed in 1935. [43•3 Although the government felt that the measures proposed would "have a stronger stabilising effect on the economy during downturns," [43•4 the bill failed to pass. In mid-1970, when the unemployment rate took a sharp upward turn, Congress, after a lengthy debate, approved the Employment Security Act Amendments which extended unemployment insurance coverage to an additional 4.7 million workers not previously covered. The new law also provided for an additional 13 weeks of benefit payments (but not to exceed 39 weeks) if over a period of three months the unemployment rate remained above 4.5 per cent. Interestingly, it was stipulated that this provision (to prolong the duration of benefit payments) was not to come into force immediately, that is, when the unemployment rate topped 4.5 per cent, but only a year and a half later—on January 1, 1972. [43•5

p Propaganda put out by the US monopolies tries to instill the idea that unemployment insurance benefits are already too large, that they should be trimmed in order to create a greater incentive to find work. The monopolies' mouthpiece, *the Wall Street Journal*, declared cynically in October 1964 that the society should not pay the jobless "for doing nothing 44 at all" and that unemployment benefits are nothing other than "compassion paying for idleness". [44•1 In reply to statements of this kind, the *UE News*, the newspaper of the progressive United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers Onion, wrote: "Nobody expects to get rich on unemployment compensation and it is no substitute for a job at a living wage. But certainly it is not too much to expect that the most productive workers in the world, laid off in the richest country in the world, should get enough to keep them and their families going until the owners of industry permit them to return to work." [44•2

p Despair and anxiety strike every American worker who finds himself unemployed, and the opportunity to receive compensation or any other kind of assistance cannot allay these feelings. When in 1965 the US Government announced that it intended to shut down the naval shipyard in Brooklyn the industrial accident rate doubled. Shortly after the Hudson Motor Car Company closed its plant, 15 of its former workers committed suicide and the families of over 300 broke up. [44•3

p This dread of unemployment stems from the fact that, having lost their jobs and then their right to any further benefits, workers are deprived of any means of livelihood and find themselves in a hopeless situation.

p One unemployed worker from Detroit gave the following description of himself in a letter to *The Worker*: "I cannot identify myself because I no longer have identity. I used to carry ^many labels: ‘worker’, ‘man’, ‘husband’, ‘father’, ‘friend’, ‘provider’, ‘neighbour’, ’member of the community’, to mention only a few. But I no longer hold claim to any of these.

p “. . . Now at 50, with a wife and three children to support, the youngest only eight years old, I am expected to fold my hands, go out to pasture. I am healthy and vigorous, my body aches to do an honest day’s work, but I find nothing but occasional odd jobs.

p “I think I speak for most of my fellow unemployed 45 workers when I say we do not want welfare and once a year handouts. We want jobs.” [45•1

p Characteristic of the capitalist mode of production is that the unemployment of one part of the labour force is accompanied by the intensified exploitation of the other. Automation and other technological innovations introduced into production have resulted in marked labour intensification, and work rates have been accelerated to inhuman proportions. The “dehumanisation” of working conditions in the USA reached an unprecedented scope in the 1960s.

p At a UAW Convention held in March 1964, many delegates told of unbearable working conditions in production. They reported, for example, that hundreds of people suffer from nervous disorders at the Ford plant because they cannot keep up with the furious speed of the conveyor. A resolution adopted at the convention, protesting against the existing speedup system and the employers’ attempts to squeeze out high profits at the expense of workers’ health and energy, said, in part: "Workers do not give up the right to dignity and self-respect when they punch the time clock, nor do they become the property of the corporations during their working hours. They remain human beings entitled to human treatment.” [45•2

p In the summer of 1967, *The Wall Street Journal*, which certainly cannot be suspected of being sympathetic towards the working class, described the difficult working conditions at one of the country’s newest automobile plants. After working for one week on the plant’s assembly line, a reporter for that newspaper wrote about its breakneck speed, about the physical and mental pressure that the workers are under, about the frequent violation of industrial safety regulations, etc. "Working on the line is grueling and frustrating,” he wrote, "and while it may be repetitive, it’s not simple. I learned at first-hand why 250,000 auto workers are unhappy about working conditions. . .. I’m in fairly good physical 46 shape, hut I ached all over after each day’s work on the line. . . . Nobody seemed to take any particular pride in his work. .. .” [46•1

p As they speeded up the work process, employers have in recent years also increased their surveillance over the workers, bugging their factories with all kinds of listening, viewing and other control devices. At Ford’s large River Rouge plant in Dearborn, for example, various kinds of controllers are used, including former FBI agents, to spy on production and worker output with the help of apparatus (dubbed the "Gestapo Agent" by

workers) set up in a special room. [46•2 Elsewhere, concealed television cameras are widely used. Every time the management feels that some worker is working too slowly, a red light flashes at his place of work. [46•3 Difficult working conditions, violations of labour safety regulations in industry and agriculture and widespread use of overtime work all result in accelerated wear and tear on the worker's organism, a dangerous increase in industrial accidents and greater incidence of occupational diseases. In 1961, 1,933,000 workers were injured in on-the-job accidents; in 1964, the number grew to 2,050,000 and to 2,200,000 in 1967. The number of fatal industrial accidents is also growing: 13,500 in 1961, 13,700 in 1962, 14,200 in 1963 and again in 1964, and 14,500 each year between 1967 and 1969. [46•4

p The incidence of occupational injuries assumed such catastrophic proportions that the US Department of Labour had to be called on to undertake steps to put an end to the mass murder being committed in industry. According to official figures made public by President Johnson in his State of the Union Message to Congress of January 23, 1968, criminal negligence on the part of employers with respect to worker safety results in an annual $1,500 million loss in wages by workers, 250 million man-days lost and a $5,000 million loss to the country's entire economy.

47

p Industrial accidents not only undermine the workers' health, but also seriously damage their financial position, since many workers receive no compensation if they are disabled. A survey conducted in 1970 by Michigan University showed that disability compensation laws do not apply to almost 40 per cent of the country's industrial workers. [47•1 In cases where the worker does have the right to claim disability compensation, the payments, as a rule, amount to only one half of his wages.

p Filing for disability compensation is often a complicated and drawn out affair because of the many legal restrictions. In some states, as brought out at the UAW's 19th Constitutional Convention, it frequently takes two to three years before a final decision is reached to pay a worker compensation for disability incurred on the job. In the meantime, the worker and his family remain without any means of subsistence.

p Still another form of capitalist exploitation employed by the US monopolies is wide use of overtime work.

p Years ago, after a long and stubborn struggle, the American working class won a substantially shorter workweek. However, this did not curb the desire of employers to lengthen the workday beyond the standards established by law. Although there are always several million fully or partially unemployed in the United States, many workers are required to work overtime. Financial insecurity and uncertainty about tomorrow always prompt them to agree to overtime work or to take side jobs in order somehow to make ends meet.

p Although the 40-hour workweek is established by law, about 15.7 million workers worked 41 or more hours a week in 1965. [47•2 In February 1966, nearly one-third of the country's wage earners worked over 41 hours a week; of these, over 20 per cent worked 48 hours a week and more. According to figures presented in Congress, 62,500,000 overtime hours were worked in just one week of March 1964. [47•3 Hence, because of the widespread use of overtime, the workweek for many workers is actually considerably longer than 40 hours.

48

p The capitalists find that paying for overtime work is profitable. Secretary of Labour Willard Wirtz once noted that "employers schedule overtime. . . not for emergencies but for day-to-day operations, primarily because it is cheaper than hiring additional workers". [48•1 In many cases, employers fail to pay their workers for overtime work at the time and a half rate provided for in the Fair Labour Standards Act, but at the normal hourly rate. The Department of Labour's initial study, conducted in 1963, showed that of the 15,200,000 Americans working over 40 hours a week, less than one-third received a higher rate of pay for overtime; this applied to about 67 per cent of the construction workers, 60 per cent of the transportation workers and 92 per cent of the employees in the service field. A similar situation existed in 1965, when of the 15,700,000 people working overtime, only one-third got overtime pay. [48•2

p Thus, this contradictory combination of "overemployment" (that is, overtime and supplementary work done on a mass scale) and permanent unemployment for a large part of the US working force, once again confirms Marx's statement that "the condemnation of one part of the working class to enforced idleness by the over-work of the other part, and the converse, becomes a means of enriching the individual capitalists and accelerates at the same time the production of the industrial reserve army on a scale corresponding with the advance of social accumulation." [48•3

p One of the important factors that determine the standard of living of the working class is real wages. In recent years, workers in many industries have won increases in their nominal wage rates; this applies chiefly to the most strongly organised segments of the American working class—- steelworkers, auto workers, coal miners, construction workers, communications workers, transportation workers, etc. At the same time, however, inflation and the rising cost of living, which were aggravated by continual expansion of the Vietnam war, made real wages fall and the working man's situation deteriorate.

49

p The cost of living has been rising steadily over recent years—by 2.8 per cent in 1967, 4.2 per cent in 1968, 5.4 per cent in 1969 and by 6 per cent in 1970. [49•1 Prices have gone up sharply on food and other consumer goods, costs for medical services and education have increased, prices on houses bought on time have jumped, as well as the cost of other goods and services. In late 1968, *'The Wall Street Journal* reported that in a

matter of ten years, for example, the cost of a hospital bed went up 101 per cent, doctors' fees—38 per cent, the price of motion picture theatre tickets—50 per cent, radio and television sets—23 per cent, postal service—42 per cent. [49•2 Between 1964 and 1970, prices of all the items that go into the cost-of-living index, including food, clothing and shelter, went up 21 per cent. [49•3 In October 1969, even President Nixon had to admit that for many Americans inflation had reached a point where ". . . the ever rising cost of food and clothing and rent robs them of their savings, cheats them of the vacations and those necessary extras that they thought they had been working for." [49•4 In his State of the Union Message of January 22, 1970, Nixon noted that in the decade between 1960 and 1970, price increases raised the cost of living for the average American family of four by $200 a month. [49•5

p In an attempt to curb inflation, the Johnson Administration succeeded in having legislation adopted by Congress in June 1968 providing for a 10 per cent increase in the federal income tax and trimming federal budget expenditures by $6,000 million. These measures struck a double blow to the vital interests of the American working people. A higher income tax rate (primarily to pay for the war in Vietnam), meant an additional withdrawal of $15,300 million from the pockets of Americans and consequently an equal reduction in the population's buying power. [49•6 The $6,000 million 50 economy in budget expenditures, in the meantime, cut into the already meagre funds for alleviating the situation of the poor segments of the population.

In August 1968, *US News & World Report* lamented: "This country is undergoing a tax-increase binge the likes of which have never been seen before." [50•1 American economists estimated in early 1969 that taxes were eating up one-third of the working man's wages.

Tax Growth in the USA from 1939 to 1969 [50•2 1939 1949 1959 1969 Federal taxes, thousand million dollars 6 37 87 195 As a percentage of national income . . 9 17 22 25 State-local taxes, thousand million dollars 8 15 33 84 As a percentage of national income . . 10 7 8 11

p Discrimination in employment and wages is practised against non-whites as well as against women in the USA. Wages for these categories of working people are 35 to 50 per cent lower than the average wages of white male workers. [50•3 A special study made in early 1967 by Professor Taylor of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology showed that skilled black workers in Chicago received an average of $55.50 per week, while white workers doing the same kind of work got S65.20. [50•4

p Typically, black workers at many plants are kept on jobs in which they can never even come near getting the kind of wages received by white workers or the engineering and technical personnel, no matter how much experience, skill or knowledge they have or how hard they try. Some 51 companies keep separate job promotion lists for blacks and whites, and limits to wage increments are established (for example, at the big Monsanto Chemical plant in Arkansas), according to which the highest paid black workers receive less than the lowest paid white workers.

p Working women find themselves in a similar humiliatingly unequal position. As a rule, their wages are lower than men's wages. The women's labour force is concentrated essentially in industries where wages are traditionally low. For the overwhelming majority of women who do not have a sufficient education, unskilled labour is the only means by which they can earn a living. But even in cases where women do exactly the same work as men, they get less for it than the men. Assistant Secretary of Labour Esther Peterson admitted instances where women doing exactly the same work as men were paid between $8 and $20 a week difference and that even college graduates were paid less for performing the same work. [51•1

p After 18 years of procrastination, the US Congress finally, in June 1963, passed a bill on women's pay. The new law, which went into effect on June 11, 1964, provided for equal pay for equal work, but it applied to only 7.4 million of the women (out of 25 million) working in 1964 in factories, offices, stores, in domestic service and in agriculture. At the same time, it left many loopholes for employers who might want to ignore the law. Women in all sectors of the economy still get from 2/3 to 1/2 of what men get for performing the same work.

A substantial and continuous rise in the cost of living, further increases in labour productivity and intensivity, and limits put on increases in wages, all brought about a sharp increase in the degree to which labour power was exploited in the 1960s. Figures on real wages per unit of production in the manufacturing industry, compiled by progressive American economist Victor Perlo, show that the rate of labour exploitation during the period reviewed showed a marked upward tendency. [51•2 Between 1947 and 1958, the share of 52 *The Pay Gap (1967)* [52•1 Men's annual pay Women's annual pay Women's pay as a percentage of men's in dollars All jobs 7,298 7,484 6,757 9,523 7,744 5,439 9,817 4,273 4,284 4,537 6,307 3,283 3,071 5,341 58 0 57.2 67.1 66.2 42.4 56.5 54.4 Craftsmen and foremen . . Clerical workers Professional and technical workers . . . Salesmen Service workers (excluding houseworkers) Owners and managers of businesses labour index remained almost unchanged (not counting annual fluctuations connected primarily with cyclical development). After 1958, however, it declined steadily and rapidly, regardless of the trends in production development, dropping 11 per cent between 1959 and the end of 1964. This means a sharp rise in the rate of exploitation, or the rate of surplus value. Taking the rate of surplus value in 1958 as 100 per cent, by 1964, according to Perlo's calculations, it had reached 125 per cent.

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TEXT SIZE

Notes

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[30•1] *Labor Fact Hook*, No. 16, p. 24.

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[31•1] Joseph M. Becker, William Habcr, Sar A. Levitan, *Programs to Aid the Unemployed in the 1960s*. Published by the Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, Kalamazoo, Michigan, January 1965, p. 1.

[31•2] Joel Seidman, "Poverty in America and What Might Be Done About It", *Economic, Political and Psychological Aspects of Employment. Proceedings of a*

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[31•3] *Economic Notes*, April 1969, p. 1.

[32•1] Albert Rees, "The Dimensions of the Employment Problem Now and for the Foreseeable Future". *Proceedings of a Symposium on Employment* Sponsored by the American Bankers Association, Washington, February 24, 1964, p. 21.

[32•2] *First National City Bank. Monthly Economic Letter*, January 1965, p. 3.

[32•3] As reported in *Time* magazine, in October 1969, at a sitting of the Congressional Joint Economic Committee, Secretary of the Treasury in the Republican Administration David Kennedy was asked "whether the current 4 per cent unemployment rate was 'acceptable or unacceptable'. Ignoring a prepared statement that a staffer hastily handed to him, Kennedy replied with more candour than tact: 'Under present circumstances, it is acceptable.' " (*Time*, October 17, 1969, p. 60.) In the days that followed, however, despite persistent questioning by the press, neither the Secretary of the Treasury nor any other government official clarified just what unemployment rate the government considered unacceptable.

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[33•1] *The Nation*, June 7, 1965, p. 611.

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[42•2] Ibid., p. 16.

[42•3] Ibid.

[43•1] *'the Christian Science Monitor*, March 15, 1965.

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[44•1] *Tlif Wall Street Journal*, October (i, 1964.

[44•2] *UE News*, March 8, 1965.

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[46•4] *Labor Fact Book*, No. 16, pp. 35–36; No. 17, pp. 37–38; *The New York Times*, January 24, 1968; *AFL-CIO News*, April 5, 1969; *Time*, November 9, 1970, p. 59.

[47•1] *Time*, November 9, 1970, p. 59.

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[48•3] K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 636.

[49•1] *The American Federationist*, March 1971, p. 7.

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[49•3] *US News & World Report*, January 19, 1970, p. 30.

[49•4] *The New York Times*, October 18, 1969, p. 18.

[49•5] *US News & World Report*, February 2, 1970, p. 65.

[49•6] While the tax burden is primarily shouldered by the working people, the bourgeois government carefully protects the interests of the monopoly elite. An analysis of the incomes of 155 taxpayers, each of whom "earned" over $200,000 per year, showed (as noted at a session of the Joint Economic Committee of Congress on April 17, 1969) that they paid no income tax without violating the law. Twenty-one of these men received over $1 million each per year (*Political Affairs*, December 1969, p. 30).

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THE PROBLEM OF POVERTY AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE "GREAT SOCIETY" PROGRAMME

p It is becoming increasingly difficult for the apologists of capitalism to conceal behind satisfactory average figures the real situation in which the working people of the USA find themselves. Quite a number of authoritative studies have been published in recent years which have brought out the growing social differentiation, and the poverty and severe privation suffered by a rather large part of the country's 53 population. Studies by sociologists Harrington and Bagdikian; Wisconsin University Professor Lampman; former chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers and head of the Conference on Economic Progress Leon Keyserling; Harvard University Professor Kolko; Census Bureau economist Miller; University of Massachusetts Professor Seligman, and others, all reveal a dismal picture concealed behind the facade of the "affluent society". [53•1

p The harsh facts about the real situation of US working people shatter the notorious propaganda myths about " people's capitalism", the "democratisation of capital" and the "income revolution". They show that the working class's share of the national income is declining and that the gap between the incomes of the small group of people standing at the top rung of the social ladder and the incomes of the great majority of the people is widening.

p Figures printed by US Census Bureau economist Herman Miller in his book, *Rich Man, Poor Man*, published in January 1964, show that for decades 20 per cent of American families with the lowest incomes received only about 5 per cent of the total national income. [53•2

p The American system of inequality has displayed an oppressive tenacity in the last two decades, wrote Michael Harrington in 1968. And the social injustice "is not a product of the presidential psyche nor of faulty logic, but a coherent, consistent feature of our social structure". "The nation's statesmen proclaim that they seek only to abolish war, hunger and ignorance in the world and then follow policies which 54 make the rich richer, the poor poorer and incite the globe to violence." [54•1

p The following figures taken from official statistics point up the tremendous differentiation in personal income distribution in the USA. In 1966, while 20 per cent of the American families with the lowest incomes got only 5.4 per cent of the national income, 20 per cent of the rich families got 40.7 per cent, and 5 per cent of the richest—14.8 per cent. [54•2

p The big income gap, which shows no tendency to narrow as the years go by, increased the urgency of the problem of "the other America", as Harrington put it—the America of

the poor and unfortunate 40 to 50 million citizens who have lived, and are living today, in poverty.

p In the early 1960s the poverty level—the point at which poverty begins—as determined by the President's Council of Economic Advisers, was an annual income of $3,000 for a family of four, and for single people—no less than $1,500 (before taxes and at 1962 prices). According to criteria worked out in early 1965 by the Department of Health, Education & Welfare (taking into account such factors as size of family, the age of the head of the family, living conditions in rural areas, etc.), the limits were broken down in more detail—from $1,000 for an elderly man living alone on a farm, to a little over $5,000 for a family of seven. A little arithmetic will show at what a modest figure the official subsistence minimum was set: the $3,130 a year set for a family of four would give each member only 70 cents a day for food and $1.40 for other needs, such as shelter, medical care, transportation, etc.

p In his book *Progress or Poverty: the USA at the Crossroads*, L. Keyserling used the method for determining poverty worked out by the President's Council of Economic Advisers and came to the conclusion that in 1963 about 34.5 million Americans did not have an adequate income. [54•3 In a study published in *The Nation*, Census Bureau economist Herman Miller, using the method for determining poverty given by 55 the Department of Health, Education & Welfare, came to a similar conclusion. [55•1 The poor, according to their definition, made up about one-fifths of the population; of these, 30 million lived in families and 5 million lived alone.

p Here are the basic data cited by Miller on families living in poverty:

p —The aggregate income of the 7 million families and 5 million single persons in 1963 was $12,000 million less than needed to satisfy their minimum needs. This figure, according to Census Bureau data, comprises about 3 per cent of the national money income.

p —About 2 million poor families had no father, and almost half of them were not in a position to satisfy their minimum needs.

p —About 2 million heads of families had full time jobs the year round.

p —About 1.5 million heads of families worked full time, but not the year round. Poverty in these families stemmed from little or no income during periods of unemployment and the absence of means of subsistence in times of illness. Thus, in 50 per cent of the poor families, the head of the family worked a full day, but his annual income was too low to maintain his family.

p —According to official figures, about 2 million (25 per cent) of the poor families were dark-skinned. About onethird of all the young and middle-aged poor and a large part of the chronically poor were non-whites, although nonwhites made up only 11.8 per cent of the population.

p —About 20 per cent of the country's poor are senior citizens.

p The situation is especially serious for the children in poor families. President Johnson admitted in a message to Congress on February 8, 1967, that 5.5 million children up to 6 years of age and 9 million up to 17 years of age live in families that are so poor that they cannot provide them with normal food and shelter.

p Permanent residents of "the other America" are working blacks, who make up one of the most oppressed and neediest 56 strata of the American people. The black population, numbering 25 million persons, suffers severely from discrimination and segregation in employment and wages, housing, education and civil rights; a significant proportion live under conditions of perpetual privation and degradation. On June 11, 1963, President Kennedy quite frankly painted the dismal picture of the life of American blacks. "The Negro baby born in America today," Kennedy said, "regardless of the section or the state in which he is born, has about onehalf as much chance of completing a high school as a white baby, born in the same place, on the same day; one-third as much chance of completing college; one-third as much chance of becoming a professional man; twice as much chance of becoming unemployed; about one-seventh as much chance of earning $10,000 a year, a life expectancy which is seven years shorter and the prospects of earning only half as much." [56•1

p The report of a government commission appointed by President Johnson in the summer of 1967 to investigate the causes for black unrest cited convincing evidence that the United States is a racist society in which millions of blacks live at the very bottom of society without any hope for the future. The report pointed out that in 1966, 32 per cent of all the black families in the country were poor according to the official classification, compared with white families, among which only 13 per cent were so classified. [56•2

p The income gap between the black and white population has not diminished since then; in fact, it has shown a tendency to increase. According to data cited by Roy Wilkins, Executive Director of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, "the gap [between the median family income for Negro families] and the median income of white families grew by $800 a year from 1947–1966. In 1947, the gap between whites and blacks was only $2,174 a year. This is bad enough, but in 1966 the gap had grown to $3,036 a year." [56•3

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p The special study conducted by the above-mentioned President's commission showed that in many cities the situation for blacks is worsening. In the Hough section of Cleveland, for example, the average income for black families fell by about $700 between 1960 and 1965. During the same period, the percentage of poor families in the Bedford, Stuyvesant and Harlem sections of New York rose from 28 to 35 per cent. The percentage of poor families in the black districts of Chicago grew from 33 to 37 per cent during the same period. [57•1

p Members of other non-white national minorities in the United States—the Indians, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and others—live in no better, in many cases even worse, circumstances. Of the 550,000 Indians in the country, 380,000 live on reservations with an average annual income of $1,800 per family—less than the average income in black families and about a quarter of the average figure for the United States as a whole. [57•2 Also living in a state of constant need, poverty and privation are the Puerto Ricans, concentrated in large cities, and the Mexicans, who are basically low-paid agricultural workers in the southern regions of the country. But even poorer are the unfortunate and persecuted aborigines of Alaska. The annual income for many of them never goes above $500.

p Agricultural workers and workers on small farms stand on one of the lowest rungs of the social ladder in the United States. As pointed out in a special AFL-CIO statement, they are the poorest and most oppressed people in America. Their average income is less than $1,000 a year, and they find employment for an average of 140 days per year. [57•3

p The average wage for agricultural workers in 1963 was less than 90 cents an hour. It was 68 cents an hour in the southern states, which accounted for over half of all those employed in agriculture. The highest average hourly wage was in California—$1.30. If an agricultural worker was lucky enough to get the high wage and if he was again lucky 58 enough to find work the year round, even then his average annual income would be less than $3,000, [58•1 that is, lower than the officially recognised poverty line. Agricultural workers receive considerably lower wages than industrial workers, and the gap between the two has a tendency to grow even further. In 1910–1914, the average hourly wage of agricultural workers amounted to 67 per cent of the average wage of factory workers. By 1945, it had shrunk to 47 per cent and by 1963 to 36 per cent. [58•2

p Because of extremely low wages and chronic unemployment, the standard of living among agricultural workers is significantly lower than the average for the country. Almost half of the poorest segment of the US population are in agricultural regions. According to data cited by the Democratic Administration's Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman, over 5,100,000 families of agricultural workers and farmers live in poverty—a total of about 15,000,000 people. [58•3 Migrant workers, who make up one-fourth of the country's seasonal agricultural workers, live in extremely difficult circumstances, with average annual incomes considerably lower than those of other agricultural workers. Many migrant workers move to industrial centres after losing hope of finding work in the agricultural regions, only to swell the already overpopulated big city slums.

p The recognised centres of poverty in the United States are areas of so-called chronic depression, or areas with a high and steady rate of unemployment, and also with generally low family incomes. Such areas are divided into two groups. In Group A are areas where the general unemployment rate is 6 per cent or more, or with an average annual rate of unemployment exceeding the national rate by 50 per cent during three out of the four preceding years, by 75 per cent for two out of three years and by 100 per cent

for a period of one year out of two. In Group B are areas with low general and farmer incomes, and also microregions with a high, stable rate of unemployment.

p The number of depressed areas increased sharply in the 59 early 1960s, embracing hundreds of large and small cities and workers' settlements with a total population running into tens of millions. In March 1963, there were 18 "large", 103 "smaller" and 54 "very small" areas of chronic depression. In May 1971 (when the unemployment rate for the country went up to 6 per cent), the number of areas classified by the Department of Labour as "areas of substantial and persistent unemployment" reached 687, the highest level since May 1962. [59•1 There are millions of people suffering unemployment and material privation in the chronically depressed areas—"they are the forgotten Americans; the invisible poor whose lives are barren and without purpose. They are victims of social neglect and callous indifference, left to shift for themselves by the more affluent part of America." [59•2

p Most of the depressed areas are in the Appalachians, a mountainous region that includes all or part of the territory of the states of West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia and Alabama. What were formerly industrial boom areas, especially with respect to the coal mining industry, have now, as a result of automation, labour intensification and cutbacks in commodity markets, become areas of unemployment and poverty. Every third family living in the Appalachians has an income of less than $3,000 a year. In the early 1960s, about 400,000 people were officially registered as unemployed, while another 700,000 jobless persons were not even registered because they had lost all hope of finding work. [59•3

p The jobless inhabitants of the Appalachians and of many other of the country's depressed areas drag out a miserable existence. Here is how American sociologist B. Bagdikian described their life in an article appearing in the *Saturday Evening Post*. "There is a world inside the United States where the American Dream is dying. It is a world where, 60 when it rains at night, everyone gets up to move beds away from the leaks. Where there is no electricity—but refrigerators are valued to keep food safe from rats. Where regularly at the end of the month whole families live on things like berries and bread. Where children in winter sleep on floors in burlap bags and their lung X-rays at the age of 12 look like old men's. Where students drift hungry and apathetic through school and their parents die 10 or 20 or 30 years earlier than their countrymen! These invisible Americans are the poor and they are located everywhere in the country. In a few places, there's scarcely anyone else." [60•1 For millions of such Americans, the only thing left is to go on welfare, for they have lost all hope of finding work, are no longer eligible for unemployment benefits and have exhausted whatever savings they may have had.

p Data published by *The Wall Street Journal* show that the number of Americans who have to rely on this kind of degrading assistance increases year by year at a much faster rate than the rate of population increase for the USA as a whole. Between 1954 and 1964, the population increased from 162,000,000 to 192,000,000, i.e., it showed an 18 per cent

increase. In the same period, the number of welfare recipients increased from 5,500,000 to 7,800,000—an increase of 42 per cent. More than half of these were mothers with children. [60•2 Between 1961 and 1971, however, the number of welfare recipients in the USA had doubled from 7,200,000 to about 14,400,000. [60•3

The situation in certain cities or areas is much worse than in the country as a whole. In San Francisco, for example, the number of welfare recipients had almost doubled between 1954 and 1964, although the city's population had actually decreased during that period. Figures for New York show that between 1967 and 1971, the number of people on welfare had also doubled, totalling about 1,200,000 at the end of that period, 45 per cent of whom were blacks and 40 per cent Puerto Ricans. [60•4 In 1971, from 10 to 15 per cent of the population of many big cities were welfare recipients.

61 *People on Relief* [61•1 Number of people collecting relief Per cent of area's population Baltimore 137,793 15 2 Denver 51,825 10 1 New Orleans 88,018 14.8 New York 1 181 310 15 0 Philadelphia 288,297 14.8 St. Louis 91,605 14.7 San Francisco 101 710 14 2 Washington 79,412 10.5

p Although 14,000,000 Americans were receiving welfare in 1971, the actual number of people needing it was considerably larger. [61•2 However, various rules and restrictions and the humiliating procedure involved in proving need prevent many needy people from receiving assistance. [61•3 " Paradoxically," a *Time* editorial noted, "it is the neediest who are helped least by the welfare state." The majority of the poor reap no benefits from social security, adds the magazine. [61•4

p The assistance that poor people do receive is very small and falls far short of freeing them from poverty. "Few people realise," wrote *The Nation*, "how shockingly low are the payments received by the 7.5 million to 8 million people who at any given time are supported by public assistance. . . .These crucial standards are in most cases below, often far 62 below, the poverty level." [62•1 Figures compiled by Leon Keyserling showed that in June 1964, for example, public assistance to the poor in the country as a whole amounted to $32.51 per month per person, which for a family of three came to less than $1,200 a year. Moreover, 86 per cent of such families received no other assistance besides that miserly sum, and were thus doomed to a life of hunger.

p In April 1968, a 25-member Citizens Board of Inquiry into Hunger and Malnutrition established by an organisation called the Citizens Crusade Against Poverty reported that at least 10 million Americans may be hunger victims, and that the situation among poor people was worsening. The study group found evidence of chronic hunger and malnutrition in such diverse areas as Washington, D.C., New York City, Chicago, Des Moines and New Orleans. [62•2 The report noted that in the 265 counties of 20 states where the study was conducted (primarily in areas of chronic depression), half of the population had to be classified as poor, and that the death rate in those areas, especially among children, was twice the national average. A special Senate committee on problems of hunger reviewed the report and concluded that the problem was extremely serious.

"Hunger in the US," wrote *US News & World Report* in April 1969, "is being built up as a prime issue in national politics." [62•3

p In 1964, the US Government was forced by the pressure of circumstances to carry out a number of social measures "from above" in order to smooth down the sharpening class antagonisms and stem the upsurge in the working class's economic and political struggle. Feelings of anxiety and alarm were already beginning to grip the country because of the unveiled poverty existing behind the facade of the "affluent society" and the deprivation suffered by millions of working people who had not the wherewithal to satisfy even their basic needs.

p On January 8, 1964, President Johnson, in his State of the Union Message, called poverty "a national problem", and declared that his administration "here and now declares 63 unconditional war on poverty in America". [63•1 About two months later, on March 16, he presented his programme to Congress. On July 29, the Senate, and on August 8, the House of Representatives, passed the Economic Opportunity Act, which came to be known as the "anti-poverty bill".

p Johnson's promise to put an end to poverty and "to help each and every American citizen fulfil his basic hopes" was not something new in America. As far back as 1928, on the eve of the Great Depression, President Hoover had boasted that "we in America are nearer to the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land." [63•2 With a reminder that the presidential election of November 1964 was drawing near, the *US News & World Report* wrote: "A reading of history shows that 'poverty' and its elimination for generations have been the rallying cry of politicians in both parties when seeking office.... At the same time, opposition candidates find it difficult to attack the idea of helping the poor." [63•3

p The very fact that the US Congress passed an "anti– poverty bill" speaks eloquently of how far the greatest power in the capitalist world actually is from genuine "prosperity". Yet the practical measures taken and the funds allocated to see them through proved to be extremely limited and showed a striking lack of correspondence between word and deed. President Johnson requested an expenditure of only $962.5 million for the 1964/65 fiscal year, or, according to press estimates, a total of $25 for every poor person. Despite the obvious inadequacy of the sum requested, Congress approved an appropriation of only $947.5 million.

p Public opinion concerning the administration's programme was reflected in a *New York Times* editorial that said, in part, that "the Johnson programme, in its dimensions, is far short of measuring up to the President's assurance that 'the days of the dole in our country are numbered'.... It is too 64 limited in means, too timid in ideas, even as a jumping-off point." [64•1 At the height of the presidential campaign in mid1964, President Johnson went even further with his promises. Speaking at the University of Michigan, he declared that the goal of his administration was to create the "Great Society" in the United States, and somewhat later, in his State of the Union Message of January 4, 1965, he outlined a series of measures designed to achieve that goal. Besides

the "war on poverty", which occupied a central place in the "Great Society", the administration promised also to provide all US citizens with jobs and adequate housing, make improvements in education and medical care, abolish racial discrimination, reduce crime and also to take steps to control pollution and to keep America beautiful.

p Dictated by a desire to somehow prettify the exploitative capitalist system in the USA that is fast losing its prestige in the eyes of the public, the Johnson Administration programme was, in essence, merely an attempt to introduce some rather limited bourgeois-liberal reforms. In the words of Senator Fulbright, the "Great Society" was dreamed up as an "antidote to revolution". It reflected a desire of the ruling circles to introduce reforms which would satisfy public demands to some extent and reduce the revolutionary pressure. [64•2 Speaking ironically of President Johnson's "new American dream", the Chase Manhattan Bank's economic bulletin remarked caustically that "Washington produces fashionable words and phrases as rapidly as Broadway produces popular tunes. 'Great Society' stands high among the current favourites. .. ." [64•3

p Just how limited the "Great Society" programme was in fact can be seen from the following comparison. Expenditures under that programme for health, education, housing, assistance to the jobless and the poor, urban development and all the other social needs were considerably smaller than expenditures for military purposes.

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p With respect to the escalation of the war in Vietnam, the Johnson Administration went further and further away from the loud promises made from the beginning of 1964. The President's State of the Union Message of January 10, 1967 contained no proposals for important social legislation requiring large expenditures. For his "war on poverty" in 1968, President Johnson asked Congress to appropriate only $2,000 million out of a total budget of $135,000 million, that is, less than was being spent on the war in Vietnam in a single month.

p The administration policy also reflected the mood in Congress, the majority of whose members felt that as long as the war in Vietnam continued, the "Great Society" programme should be kept to a minimum. Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee George Mahon stated in January 1967, that his committee intended "to examine every nondefence request with considerable skepticism" in order to "weed out the tares from the wheat". [65•1 He made it clear that by the "wheat" he meant appropriations for military programmes and by the "tares", all non-military expenditures. Commenting on the cutback in the administration's programme of social legislation, Professor Arthur M. Schlesinger, a well-known historian and former special assistant to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, declared with every justification that "the Great Society is now, except for token gestures, dead. The fight for equal opportunity for the Negro, the war against poverty, the struggle to save the cities, the improvement of our schools—all must be starved for the sake of Vietnam". [65•2

p That the Johnson Administration failed to make political capital out of the "Great Society" programme was apparent from the criticism it received over the years even from within the Democratic and Republican parties. Many Democratic Party leaders and activists, according to *The Christian Science Monitor*, admitted that the "Great Society" programme was, in practice, extremely ineffective. [65•3

p Although the initial response to the programme on the 66 part of labour unions [66•1 and the public in general was, on the whole, positive, dissatisfaction grew as it began to be implemented, and criticism of the administration became rather trenchant. "A bag of tricks", "a prize piece of political pornography", was how a number of labour unions and black organisations characterised the administration's measures. [66•2

p Serious abuses were revealed in the distribution of funds earmarked for the "war on poverty", which, as *The New York Times* put it, had become a giant fiesta of political patronage. [66•3 Enormous sums were spent on salaries for tens of thousands of officials connected permanently or temporarily with the Office of Economic Opportunity, an organisation that was supposed to carry out the government programme. [66•4 The poor themselves were given no opportunity to take part either in the elaboration or the implementation of plans to fight poverty. As one community leader from Chicago noted, the President's war on poverty "had been cruelly twisted into a war against the poor". [66•5 The extreme dissatisfaction with the measures being taken by the government to fight poverty found clear expression in April 1966 at the second poor peoples' congress held in Washington. The congress, which was attended by more than 800 delegates, was convoked by the Citizens Crusade Against Poverty, headed by Walter Reuther, President of the United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of America. In an address highly critical of the Johnson Administration, 67 Reuther also charged that "certain forces" in Congress were calling for cutting down to an "eyedropper's worth" funds for the war on poverty using Vietnam as a reason. He said that if a more energetic programme of action were not adopted in the fight against poverty, the embittered and desperate poor people would start looking for an answer themselves.

p Events after 1967—revolts by poor blacks in many cities throughout the country, the great poor people's march on Washington in the summer of 1968, the massive poor peoples' campaign against hunger and poverty launched by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in the spring of 1969, and other public manifestations—show that America's poor, disenchanted with government programmes, have taken up a resolute struggle for their economic interests and civil rights.

p In a situation where the giant monopoly corporations intensify their attack upon the vital interests of the working class, while the government, carrying out the will of the monopoly bourgeoisie, shifts the burden of growing military expenditures connected with the escalation of the war in Vietnam on to the shoulders of the working people, all the demagogy about building a "Great Society" became patently absurd. "We do not believe the measures in the Great Society concept are realistic in an economy based on war

production," declared Gus Hall, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the USA, in January 1965. "A Great Society and a War Society are two opposites." [67•1

Increased exploitation of the working class has lead to the further intensification of the economic struggle. Defending its vital interests and rights and putting up stiff resistance to the monopolies' offensive, the working class and its organised sector, the labour unions, come into increasingly sharp and frequent confrontation with the bourgeois state apparatus which more and more openly acts as the guarantor of the interests of monopoly capital.

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TEXT SIZE

Notes

[53•1] M. Harrington, *The Other America. Poverty in the United States*, New York, 1962; M. Harrington, *Toward a Democratic Left. A Radical Program for a New Majority*, McMillan, New York, 1968; Ben Bagdikian, *In the Midst of Plenty: The Poor in America*, A Signet Book, Published by the New American Library, New York, 1963; Robert J. Lampman, *The Share of Top Wealth Holders in National Wealth. 1922–1956*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1962; "Poverty and Deprivation in the USA. The Plight of Two-Fifths of a Nation". Conference on Economic Progress, 1962; Gabriel Kolko, *Wealth and Power in America;* Frederick A. Praeger, New York, 1962; Herman P. Miller, *Rich Man, Poor Man*, A Signet Book, Published by the New American Library, New York, 1965; B. Seligman, *Permanent Poverty. An American Syndrome*, Quadrangle Books, Chicago, 1968.

[53•2] Herman P. Miller, *Rich Man, Poor Man*, p. 53.

[54•1] M. Harrington, *Toward a Democratic Left*, New York, 1968, p. 3.

[54•2] *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1968, p. 324.

[54•3] *Ford Facts*, April 5, 1965; *Retail Clerks Advocate*, February 1965. pp. 13–14.

[55•1] Herman P. Miller, "Who Are the Poor?", *The Nation*, June 7, 1965, pp. 609–10.

[56•1] *The Worker*, June 23, 1963.

[56•2] "Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. Summary of Report", Washington, 1968, p. 252.

[56•3] *Proceedings of the Twenty-Second General Convention of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America*, AFL-CIO, San Diego, California, July 8-12, 1968, p. 74.

[57•1] *US News & World Report*, February 19, 1968, p. 61.

[57•2] *Monthly Labor Review*, March 1969, p. 19; *Spectator*, Tuly 10, 1971, p. 52.

[57•3] *Farm Workers*, AFL-CIO. Legislative Department, Fact Sheet, 1965, No. 11.

[58•1] *The American Federationist*, June 1964, p. 8.

[58•2] Ibid., p. 9.

[58•3] *The International Teamster*, February 1964, p. 23.

[59•1] *AFL-CIO News*, May 8, 1971.

[59•2] "The Values We Cherish. Keynote Address to the Fifth Constitutional Convention of November 7, 1963". By Walter P. Reuther. Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO, p. 10.

[59•3] *Appalachia*, Proceedings. Appalachian Trade Union Conference, Charleston, West Virginia, October 12–14, 1964, p. 9.

[60•1] *The International Teamster*, February 1964, p. 17.

[60•2] *The Wall Street Journal*, January 8, 1965.

[60•3] *US News & World Report*, August 9, 1971, p. 13.

[60•4] *New York Post*, March 29, 1971.

[61•1] *US News & World Report*, August 9, 1971, p. 14.

[61•2] In 1967, for example, over 29,000,000 poor Americans (over 9,000,000 of whom were non-whites) received no help whatever from federal, state or city agencies. (*Monthly Labor Review*, February 1969, p. 34.)

[61•3] In 1970–1971, bills were introduced in the legislative assemblies of several states providing for compulsory sterilisation of welfare recipients. A bill was introduced in the Illinois state legislature, for example, which would require either the husband or wife receiving welfare and having three or more children to undergo obligatory sterilisation if they wanted to continue receiving welfare payments. Similar bills were introduced in Tennessee and South Carolina. (*The Nation*, lune 28, 1971, p. 809.)

[61•4] *Time*, May 13, 1966, p. 14.

[62•1] *The Nation*, June 7, 1965, p. 613.

[62•2] *US News & World Report*, May 13, 1968, p. 48.

[62•3] Ibid., April 2<S, 1969, p. 32.

[63•1] "President Johnson's Declaration of War on Poverty. From the State of the Union Message, January 1964", *Sourcebook on Labor*, Neil W. Chamberlain, McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York, 1964, p. 360.

[63•2] Allan Nevins and Henry S. Commager, *The Pocket History of the United States*, Overseas Editions, Inc., New York, 1942, p. 368.

[63•3] *US News & World Report*, January 20, 1964, p. 36.

[64•1] *The New York Times*, October 19, 1964.

[64•2] J. W. Fulbright, *The Arrogance of Power*, Random House, New York, 1967, p. 72.

[64•3] *The Chase Manhattan Bank. Business in Brief*, issued bimonthly by the Economic Research Division, New York, May-June, 1965 (No. 62), p. 3.

[65•1] *The Worker*, January 10, 1967.

[65•2] *International Affairs*, No. 2, 1967, p. 51.

[65•3] *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 10, 1967.

[66•1] A resolution adopted at the Sixteenth Biennial Convention of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union in April 1965, noted that "we have no choice but support the individual steps toward the Great Society. None of the proposals go nearly as far as we would like to go, but for the most part they are in the right direction and, even though minimal and compromised, they will not be adopted without a serious struggle with reactionary forces". (*Proceedings of the Sixteenth Biennial Convention of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union*, Vancouver, Canada, April 5 to 9, 1965, p. 512.)

[66•2] *Time*, May 13, 1966, p. 13.

[66•3] *The New York Times*, May 12, 1965.

[66•4] For the huge army of government officials, the "war on poverty" became nothing more than a vehicle for personal enrichment. For example, Mitchell Sviridoff, who headed the struggle against poverty in New York, drew a salary of $40,000 a year, and his five deputies received from $22,000 to $35,000 a year.

[66•5] *Detroit Free Press*, April 16, 1965.

[67•1] *The Worker*, January 24, 1965. p. 3.

CHAPTER II
THE GOVERNMENT'S SOCIAL POLICY AND THE LABOUR UNIONS

FEATURES OF THE KENNEDY AND JOHNSON ADMINISTRATIONS' "NEW POLICY" TOWARD LABOUR

p Since the beginning of the 1960s, when the Democratic Party came to power, government interference in the relations between labour and capital increased.

p The successes of socialism in the economic competition between the two systems, the revolutionising influence of those successes on processes taking place in the capitalist countries, the aggravation of internal class contradictions and fear of their continued growth—all this forced the leaders of the Democratic Administration to introduce a number of new factors into their policy. While continuing with its strong and unveiled support of the interests of the dominating class, the government began increasingly to resort to bourgeois-reformist manoeuvres, making individual social concessions with the aim of holding back the development of the working class's economic and political struggle.

p A major feature in both the New Frontiers course of President Kennedy and President Johnson's Great Society was the attempt to camouflage the intensified exploitation of the working people, to create the illusion of social unity and a community of interests between labour and capital. This was done with the help of more flexible government regulation of labour relations, the broad involvement of top labour union officials in carrying out the policy, and the significantly greater use than during Eisenhower's presidency of the "human relations" tactic to try to establish "class peace" and "class collaboration". As noted in the Main Document of the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' 69 Parties held in Moscow in 1969, "in its actions against the working-class movement imperialism violates democratic rights and freedoms and uses naked violence, brutal methods of police persecution and anti-labour legislation. Moreover, it has recourse to demagogy, bourgeois reformism and opportunist ideology and policy, and is constantly in quest of new methods to undermine the working-class movement from within and 'integrate' it into the capitalist system." [69•1

p As it prepared for the 1960 presidential election, the Democratic Party leadership undertook a series of steps to establish close relations with the leaders of the AFL-CIO. Unlike the Eisenhower Administration, which had pursued a crude and unveiled anti-labour policy which, in the 1950s, resulted in the breakdown of the alliance between the labour union bureaucracy and the bourgeois government (which had existed since the time of President Roosevelt's New Deal), the Democratic Party realised that without the broad support of organised labour it could not hope to win in the upcoming election.

p Whereas in previous elections the labour unions were not solidly behind one or the other of the bourgeois parties, in 1960, the leaders of the AFL-CIO and the overwhelming majority of independent unions came out officially with a call to launch an intensive political campaign to get labour union members and their families to vote for the Democratic candidates. [69•2

p Strong labour union support was to a large extent won by Kennedy's relatively liberal platform (in comparison with 70 the Republican platform) with respect to domestic affairs and, in particular, with respect to labour relations.

p The Democrats promised that if elected, their administration would take immediate and effective steps to improve living conditions, reduce unemployment, make radical improvements in aid to the jobless, raise the minimum wage and increase the number of categories covered by the minimum wage law and alleviate the situation of the farmers. The administration would also fight for the preservation and even the restoration of labour union rights, seek the re– examination and repeal of certain especially odious anti-labour laws, such as the "right to work" clause of the Taft-Hartley Act which obstructed the growth of labour union membership.

p Despite its limited nature, the programme proposed by the Democratic Party and its leader John F. Kennedy offered certain concessions to the American working class. It reflected the desire of the Democratic Party leadership and the bourgeois circles supporting it, as well as of Right-wing labour union leaders, to keep the dissatisfaction felt by masses of working people within bounds and prevent the economic struggle of the working class from growing into a political struggle.

p The generally strong support coming from organised labour clinched the election for Kennedy. In November 1963, he told the delegates of an AFL-CIO convention: "Three years ago and one week, by a landslide, the people of the United States elected me to the Presidency of this country, and it is possible that you had something to do with that majority of 112,000 votes." [70•1

p President Kennedy's new labour policy was in essence a new stage in government interference in labour-capital relations, primarily in the sphere of collective bargaining. It was undertaken in order to limit the rights of labour unions in negotiations with employers, above all in such vitally important questions as wages and hours. At the same time, Kennedy tried to create the impression that his policy was based on observing the interests of both workers and employers 71 and, moreover, in a way that would also be in keeping with the interests of the society as a whole. His administration, Kennedy said, would not be "a businessman's administration, but neither will it be a labour administration, or a farmer's administration. It will be an administration representing, and seeking to serve, all Americans." [71•1

p The most suitable candidate for the job of carrying out Kennedy's policy of class collaboration to the benefit of monopoly capital turned out to be Arthur Goldberg, a lawyer who for more than 12 years had been the chief legal counsellor for the AFL-CIO,

its Industrial Union Department and several affiliates, including the steelworkers union. Goldberg's ideas on the need to establish close co-operation between labour and capital, and especially his concrete proposals for implementing this co-operation through various committees in which the "three interested forces"—the employers, the labour unions and representatives of the " public"—would take part, were the decisive factor in his becoming in December 1960 Kennedy's Secretary of Labour.

p Although Kennedy hoped that with Goldberg's help he could strengthen ties between the government and the labour union bureaucracy, his choice did not entirely please the top officials of the AFL-CIO; there were serious objections to Goldberg even in the highest labour union circles. The leaders of the AFL-CIO wanted to see one of their own elected union officials as Secretary of Labour, but Kennedy rejected all five candidates proposed by George Meany. "The selection of Goldberg apart from his personal merit," commented well-known expert on the labour movement George Morris, writing in *The Worker*, "is fresh confirmation of the fact that those who rule America nurse an undying antipathy toward the labour movement, even for its very conservative precapitalist labour leaders. They don't trust their best friends in trade union leadership." [71•2

p Immediately after his appointment, "labour's man" Arthur Goldberg (following Kennedy's lead) called for moderation and restraint in labour's demands for higher wages and 72 a shorter workweek, although previously he had defended diametrically opposite views. [72•1 Right-wing union leaders, not wishing to spoil relations with Kennedy's Administration, at first took an extremely passive and conciliatory position on these vital issues.

p The conciliatory approach taken by the AFL-CIO leadership reached a point where, in working out a programme of basic demands that would serve as a basis for labour union alliance and co-operation with the Kennedy Administration, the Executive Council, meeting in January 1961, did not include the demand for reducing the workweek, a demand that had been part of the AFL-CIO's traditional policy for many years.

p To carry out its new labour relations policy aimed at achieving "class peace", the Kennedy Administration began from the outset to draw Right-wing labour union leaders into closer co-operation with government agencies. Various committees and commissions were set up to work out and co– ordinate labour-management policy, with the active participation and actually under the direction of government officials. The administration attached great importance to the President's Advisory Committee on Labour-Management Policy, which was set up in early 1961. The committee consisted of 19 advisers: seven representatives of industry (including auto king Henry Ford and president of International Business Machines Thomas Watson), labour union representatives (George Meany, Walter Reuther, David Dubinsky, Joseph Keenan, David McDonald, George Harrison, and five labour relations experts representing "the public". The committee chairmen were the Secretary of Labour and the Secretary of Commerce.

p The Committee's job was not to look into conflicts or try to settle individual disputes. Its aims were much broader: to study problems of technological progress, unemployment

and economic development, an J also "to give direction to the general movement of wages and prices so that the general welfare of this country can be served". [72•2 "I deem this a most important committee," declared President Kennedy. "It is my hope that the Committee may help to restore that sense 73 of common purpose which has strengthened our Nation in times of emergency and generate a climate conducive to co-operation and resolution of differences." [73•1 Its major task, the President noted, "is to help our free institutions work better and to encourage sound economic growth and healthy industrial relations." [73•2 An analysis made by Lloyd Ulman, Director of the University of California's Institute of Industrial Relations, shows that the terms of reference of the new Advisory Committee were broader than those of the President's Council of Economic Advisers. The committee dealt with problems of collective bargaining as well as many problems of economic policy that were usually considered the prerogative of the Council of Economic Advisers.

p It should be noted that the idea of instituting a series of conferences between top-level representatives of labour and management as a means of lessening the growing tensions in labour-management relations was first advanced by Goldberg in a lecture given at the University of Wisconsin in 1958. [73•3 Two years later, AFL-CIO president George Meany made a similar suggestion. Immediately after a 116-day steel strike was halted Meany proposed that President Eisenhower call a conference to work out measures to prevent such strikes in the future and restore harmony in labour– management relations. Similar suggestions and projects were frequently made in the late 1950s by another famous labour union bureaucrat and proponent of a policy of "close collaboration"—David McDonald, president of the United Steelworkers of America. President Kennedy's Advisory Committee on Labour-Management Policy, he declared at this union's convention in 1962, "is the fruition of an idea which we have championed publicly for many years". [73•4

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p Reformist labour leaders apparently felt that their active co-operation with representatives of big business and "the public" would demonstrate the "respectability" and "social responsibility" of labour unions and would help to solve a number of their serious problems. In June 1960, for example, a special resolution adopted at a convention of the Textile Workers Union in support of Meany's "initiative" stressed that "a continuing national conference of management and labour can be the means of lifting the sights of both parties toward higher goals—-A regular exchange of views can lead to new and better ways of promoting economic expansion and insuring that such gains are shared equitably." [74•1 It is noteworthy that a few months after the President's Advisory Committee was set up, Right-wing labour leaders began suggesting that the President create similar committees for individual industries. The need for such a move was noted, for example, in a resolution adopted by a Special Collective Bargaining Convention of the United Auto Workers in April 1961. [74•2

p After a series of meetings, the Advisory Committee sent two reports to the President: one on January 11, 1962, entitled "The Benefits and Problems Incident to Automation

and Other Technological Advances", and one on May 1, 1962, entitled "Free and Responsible Collective Bargaining and Industrial Peace". While the first report went no further than to make a general statement about the complexity of the problems created by automation and express some good but not very concrete wishes, the second report outlined some proposals that considerably expanded the rights of government agencies in regulating labour conflicts and reexamined a number of facets of the existing collective bargaining system.

p In particular, the Advisory Committee suggested broadening the power of the Emergency Dispute Boards that are appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service "in any collective– 75 bargaining situation in a major or critical industry which may develop into a dispute threatening the national health or safety". [75•1 Emergency Dispute Boards could be set up at any stage of negotiation, the report noted, and should have the right of recommending and approving conditions for averting conflicts. Moreover, the report, which, incidentally, was signed by some eminent labour union leaders, suggested strengthening certain provisions of the odious anti-labour Taft-Hartley Act, and particularly its provision for a cooling off period in labour disputes. According to the Taft-Hartley Act, the President had to receive court approval before he could "invoke the period". Now, the decision would be left entirely up to him. [75•2 If at the end of the 80-day cooling off period the sides do not reach an agreement, the report noted, the President can ban a strike, after submitting his proposals for averting the conflict to Congress. [75•3

p The Advisory Committee's recommendations gave the government additional opportunities for direct interference in labour relations, regardless of how little the moves made by the government corresponded to existing laws.

p Another agency designed to help the government prevent labour-management confrontations was the 12-man National Labour-Management Panel, appointed by President Kennedy in May 1963 on the basis of the Taft-Hartley Act and consisting of six labour union representatives and six representatives of management. The duty of the panel, according to Section 205 (b) of the Taft-Hartley Act, is "at the request of the Director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, to advise in the avoidance of industrial controversies and the manner in which mediation and voluntary adjustment shall be administered, particularly with reference to controversies affecting the general welfare of the countrv". [75•4 In a statement released at the time the panel was 76 reestablished, [76•1 President Kennedy stressed that he had observed "a new willingness on the part of both sides" to "solve disputes peacefully". [76•2

p Another important job given to the National Labour– Management Panel was to co-ordinate the activities of so-called human relations committees and committees of investigation functioning in the steel, automobile, rubber, electrical, construction and other industries. All of these committees constituted a new form of closer government-controlled cooperation between the trade union bureaucracy and the capitalists. The aim of each such committee was, by continuous negotiations and often with the participation of a third, "neutral", party, to find a compromise solution with respect to a new collective

agreement. *The Wall Street Journal* revealed the real aims of such committees and their dependence on Government agencies when it wrote quite frankly that "Government men firmly intend to corral top management and union men in one room beforehand and tell them the outcome of their bargaining sessions; only the details will be left to private dickering and decision." [76•3

p Perhaps the best known in the country was the Human Relations Committee working in the steel industry. Set up at the initiative of David McDonald and Arthur Goldberg after the 116-day steel strike in 1959, its function was to settle disputes between the eleven major steel companies and the steelworkers union in order to avoid similar conflicts in the future. Bourgeois experts on the labour movement and the bourgeois press lauded it as a model of a new " responsible" approach in settling disputes "on a basis of reason, rather than muscle". [76•4

p Continuous secret negotiations between top level union and company officials actually deprived not only the union rank-and-file but also middle echelon union leaders of the chance to exert any influence whatever on the agreements being worked out. Indeed, the first collective bargaining 77 agreement with the steel companies that was concluded as a result of the Human Relations Committee's negotiations in 1962 turned out to be the least favourable agreement, from the standpoint of the workers, in the entire post-war period. But it was an important victory for the steel companies: for the first time in 20 years they succeeded in avoiding the threat of a national steel strike. The government, individual bourgeois politicians and the bourgeois press naturally hailed the agreement, calling it a model of amicable handling of labourmanagement relations and one of the most important events in labour relations in the post-war period. As for David McDonald, he obligingly predicted that the new agreement would perhaps eliminate strikes in the steel industry " forever". [77•1

p A similar objective was pursued by the Joint Study Committee set up in April 1963, consisting of representatives of the UAW, General Motors, Ford Motor Co., and Chrysler Corp. It should be noted that here, too, the initiative came from the union leadership, particularly from UAW president Walter Reuther, and was warmly supported by the government. The committee was expected to lay the groundwork for "unobstructed" collective bargaining in 1964, in order "to minimise the dangers of breakdown", as Reuther put it in his letter to heads of the auto companies. [77•2

p Despite the government support it enjoyed, this form of class co-operation—this policy of "human relations" imposed on many unions by their leaders—met with strong opposition on the part of union rank-and-file. In the auto industry, for example, instead of the "peace and harmony" that was supposed to come with the help of the Joint Study Committee, a big strike broke out in 1964 when the workers rejected the terms of an agreement worked out by their leaders. And in 1965, the steelworkers, fed up with the policy of class collaboration pursued by David McDonald, voted that inveterate conciliator out of office in a union referendum.

p After the Democrats captured the White House, government interference in labour-management relations grew, 78 primarily through various kinds of mediation and conciliation organisations. The main purpose of the latter was to prevent aggravation of the struggle between labour and capital, i.e., to paralyse the struggle of the working people. [78•1 Particularly noticeable was the heightened role of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, which had been established in 1947 on the basis of the Taft-Hartley Act. Its function was to facilitate adjustment of labour disputes, but its decisions were not to be considered binding on the parties involved. However, in the early 1960s the FMCS began, with administration backing, to take on pressure functions during collective bargaining negotiations. "Mediation with a club" is what the American press called the Kennedy Administration's labour policy. FMCS director William Simkin noted that "the federal government is stressing preventative mediation to encourage continuing talks between labour and management to cut down the possibility of strikes". [78•2 Strongest labour union criticism was levelled at the FMCS for exceeding its authority. Answering such criticism in May 1962 at a conference on collective bargaining, Simkin said: "We do believe that FMCS has a duty and responsibility to exert all reasonable efforts. .. to be of assistance. What we have labelled 'more aggressive mediation' for want of better words is nothing more than utilisation of tactics that the best mediators have always used." [78•3

p Nearly half of the strikes taking place in the country in 1964, including the biggest ones, were settled with the direct participation of government mediation and conciliation 79 services. [79•1 Every year, about 95 per cent of all labour disputes are settled with the active participation of organisations and arbitration committees of various kinds. [79•2 The newspaper *The Worker* aptly noted that "... in the atmosphere of the current monopoly drive to destroy the labour movement, arbitration has become a key factor on the side of the employers." [79•3

p Thus, the Democratic Administration protecting the interests of the monopolies, made wide use of its alliance with the union bureaucracy in carrying out a policy of strike prevention. It understood full well—as Willard Wirtz, who replaced Goldberg as Secretary of Labour, admitted—that disputes between employers and unions, in a way similar to international conflicts, had now become too serious to rely only on force to settle them.

p Yet both the Kennedy and the Johnson administrations did not hesitate to use force in banning and suppressing strikes whenever they could not, with the help of obsequious Rightist union leaders, "human relations committees", and various kinds of mediation and conciliation services, bring about a "peaceful" adjustment of labour disputes in key industries.

p Typical of the many examples of open government interference in labour-management relations was the total support given by the government to the monopolies in one of the hardest and most stubborn battles that the American working class has had to fight in recent years, namely, the struggle of the railway workers to defend their right to work.

p The railway conflict arose in 1959 when employers announced their intention to introduce new working conditions. The owners held that the accepted system of work was obsolete and that unnecessary operational costs and the maintenance of "superfluous" labour power were causing tremendous losses and were a drain on the railroads' competitive power. What was contemplated was an immediate layoff of at least 40,000 stokers and 25,000 employees in other categories, and the layoff of another 200,000 railway workers in the near future.

p It was obvious that implementation of this plan would be a serious blow to the labour unions, virtually reducing to naught the results of years of struggle by the railway workers and establishing a precedent for continued arbitrary rule by the railroad companies. The railway workers' unions denounced the programme and threatened to strike if it was implemented. But President Eisenhower intervened and the strike was banned on the basis of the Railway Labour Act. A special commission was appointed to settle the dispute.

p In February 1962, after three years of investigation, the commission submitted its recommendations (by that time to President Kennedy), fully approving the plans of the railroad companies. The unions then filed suit, but their hopes for a fair decision were in vain: the courts at every level, right up to the Supreme Court, decided in favour of the employers. The strike question was again put on the agenda; the unions announced that as soon as the "new rules" went into effect, the railway workers would automatically stop work. But on April 3, 1963, President Kennedy declared a state of emergency on the railroads on the basis of that same Railway Labour Act, and the strike was again postponed. A new commission was appointed to study the causes of the controversy. Its findings differed little from the ones that came before. Nor did Labour Secretary Wirtz's stepping in as government arbitrator do any real good, even though an agreement to continue negotiations was reached.

p At the end of July 1963, the negotiations came to a dead end. The railroad companies, feeling full support from the government, refused to make any concessions. Meanwhile, President Kennedy, again seeking to delay final solution to the problem, introduced a bill that would turn the dispute over to the Interstate Commerce Commission for investigation. Having exhausted peaceful means of struggle, the union issued a strike call for August 29, 1963. The day before the strike deadline, both Houses of Congress (the Senate by a vote of 90 to 2 and the House of Representatives by a vote of 286 to 66) quickly passed a new emergency bill calling for compulsory arbitration in railway disputes. President Kennedy promptly signed the law.

p This new anti-labour law created a dangerous precedent for increased presidential and congressional interference in 81 labour disputes, especially in industries of national significance. "No worker in America is safe in his job," said president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters James Hoffa, "if this (compulsory arbitration.—*A.M.*) is to become the policy of our government." [81•1

p Pursuant to the emergency law, the railway strike was postponed for six months. The seven-man arbitration board appointed by Kennedy was charged with the task of investigating the dispute and rendering a final decision that would be binding on both sides. Four months later, the board announced its decision, as a result of which 40,000 workers were laid off.

p At the end of February 1964, as soon as the term of the emergency law expired, the fierce and exhausting war between the railroad companies and the labour unions entered a new stage. Negotiations (this time held separately) between individual companies and the railway workers' unions again failed. The railroad magnates declared unconditionally that they would put the "new work rules" into force, that is, they would begin a new round of layoffs. In response, the unions said they were prepared to strike, and set April 22, 1964 as a deadline. Over 200,000 workers were ready to take part in a strike that threatened to paralyse the country's entire economic life.

p In connection with the threat of a nationwide strike, President Johnson stepped into the dispute. Labour and management representatives were summoned to the White House to continue negotiations under the personal supervision of the US President. They were given 15 days to settle the dispute, and on April 21, 1964, under heavy pressure from Johnson and Secretary of Labour Wirtz, an agreement was signed. The threat of the biggest railway strike in the country's history was averted.

p "They won a skirmish and lost a battle," was how the progressive newspaper, *People's World*, assessed the results of the five-year struggle of the railway workers' unions. [81•2 And indeed, although through the new agreement the unions 82 had won for the workers a certain wage increase, small compensation payments for involuntary work stoppages and a few additional paid holidays, they had to give in on what was most important: they had to agree to layoffs and labour intensification, that is, to the introduction of what were in essence the "new work rules". Following the new agreement, 49,000 railway workers had to give up their jobs in the transportation industry.

p As became known later, the number of people employed by the railroads was reduced by 150,000 through layoffs and resignations since the beginning of the dispute. [82•1 Yet the conflict arose when 65,000 workers' right to work was threatened.

p During that period, the profits of the railroad magnates went up considerably: in 1961, the profit figure was $382 million, in 1962—$571 million and in 1963—over $650 million. [82•2 In 1964, *The Wall Street Journal* predicted that the profits of the railroad companies would increase by many millions of dollars after the first group of workers—11,500 firemen—were laid off. [82•3 Exactly one year later, *The New York Herald Tribune* estimated that the layoffs of the firemen, 30 per cent of whom were still jobless at that time, gave the companies a "saving" of $75 million. [82•4

p US monopoly capital properly assessed the services of the government and the personal contributions of Presidents Kennedy and Johnson in "regulating" this, one of the biggest

and most prolonged labour disputes in recent years. As for the working class, it got one more graphic confirmation of the fact that the government in a bourgeois society is always on the side of big business.

p The government's use of every means of struggle against the railway workers' unions (beginning with pressure applied personally by Kennedy and Johnson and ending with the invocation of old and new anti-labour laws) showed that the ruling circles were openly striving to deprive the labour unions of their most effective weapon for protecting the interests of the working class—the right to strike.

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p Active government intervention in labour-management disputes, having become widespread under President Kennedy (the railway conflict was an example of this) was continued and developed even further under President Johnson. Pointing to this feature of the Johnson Administration's anti-labour policy, Secretary of the National Committee of the Communist Party of the USA George Meyers wrote: "... President Johnson finds it necessary to intervene directly in labour disputes, openly placing the strength and prestige of the administration branch of the government behind the corporations. He tries to limit much-needed wage increases in the face of 'guidelines'. He has endeavoured to dictate contract settlements detrimental to labour." [83•1

p A prime feature of Johnson's anti-labour policy was the effort made by government organs to prevent or ban strikes, above all in industries producing for the war in Vietnam. In October 1966, provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act were invoked to prevent a strike in a number of enterprises of the General Electric Corporation, where workers were demanding wage increases and better working conditions. Johnson tried to justify his anti-labour actions by saying that an electricians strike would jeopardise national security. General Electric, he said, "is a leading producer and developer of a wide range of munitions, electronic equipment and missiles for the armed forces. It makes power plants for our ships and submarines. It supplies the engines for the F-4 Phantom fighter and for our helicopters, machine-guns for many of our combat aircraft and battlefield radar equipment.

p "Our men in Vietnam need these planes, these helicopters, these weapons.... And they need them now, not next week or next month." [83•2

p Similarly, in November 1966, a steel strike in Indiana was blocked because it would have disrupted the Pentagon's plans for the production of new jet fighters and helicopters for the Vietnam war. Upon direction of the President, the matter was turned over to a federal circuit court, which duly enjoined the strike on the basis of the Taft-Hartley Act.

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p In March 1967, President Johnson intervened in a strike by electrical workers in 13 West Coast ports. Secretary of Defence McNamara, under whose intercession the conflict

was stopped, said that the strike had created critical difficulties in the repair of ships used for carrying military cargo to South Vietnam.

p The Taft-Hartley Act was also invoked to prevent a strike of 4,800 UAW members at the Avco Corporation's helicopter engine plant in New Haven, Connecticut. On April 18—the day after the strike began—the federal government ordered a temporary court injunction prohibiting the strike. On April 25, a federal court also prohibited a strike of 500 Avco Corporation office and laboratory workers. According to Assistant US Secretary of Defence Vance, strikes at the Avco plant could cause an "irreparable setback" in the production of items sorely needed by the US armed forces in Vietnam.

p The Democratic Party and President Johnson, in an effort to win the 17,000,000-strong labour union vote in the 1964 presidential election, solemnly announced their readiness to ihtroduce a number of legislative measures that would improve the legal position of the labour unions. Again, as in 1960, the promise was made to re-examine the notorious Section 14b of the Taft-Hartley Act, on the basis of which anti-union "right to work" laws existed in 19 states. However, after the election, the promises were not kept. Moreover, the Johnson Administration not only made wide use of existing anti-labour laws, but became the author of new anti-labour legislation.

p In his message to Congress in January 1966, President Johnson recommended that legislation be passed prohibiting strikes in the transportation, communications and municipal services fields. The bill was introduced in Congress one month after a long strike by New York city transport workers had ended in a union victory. The bill reflected the apprehension felt in the ruling circles over the very real prospects of similar strikes in the future. It is noteworthy that Johnson's clearly anti-labour recommendation had, as reported in the *New York Herald Tribune*, received preliminary approval from AFL-CIO president George Meany and was later supported by UAW president Walter Reuther. On 85 January 16, 1966, meeting with big businessmen at the Economic Club in Detroit, Reuther declared that actions such as the transport workers' strike in New York were "obsolete" and that society could not tolerate them. [85•1

p The US monopolies welcomed a statement made by Johnson in 1966 to the effect that Congress should pass a compulsory arbitration law which would further limit the labour unions' right to strike. And after the congressional elections in the autumn of 1966, it became known that President Johnson appointed a special committee to work out new antistrike legislation. [85•2

p The Johnson Administration's moves to reduce to a minimum conflicts between labour and capital that were so " costly" to employers were highly satisfactory as far as the US monopoly circles were concerned. The American press noted with open satisfaction the trend toward more extensive and intensive co-operation between government and big business. In January 1966, for example, *Fortune* magazine wrote: "This new outlook in Washington is the deepest reason for the rapprochement, during the Johnson Administration, between government and business. The two still have and will always have different responsibilities and aims. But they are beginning to use the same working

language, depend on the same kinds of people, and get at tasks and decisions in the same way. More than administrative style is involved in this Washington shift. The whole framework of US politics is changing." [85•3

Frank statements made in the press by representatives of business indicated how much confidence the big bourgeoisie had in Johnson and how much it approved of his administration's labour policy. In November 1964, when a dispute again broke out between employers and the railroad unions, a representative of one of the railroad companies frankly and confidently predicted that decisive intervention by the President would be effective and that no strike would take place. "All the President has to do (to prevent strikes.—*A.M.*) is to pick up a telephone," he said. [85•4

86 And in 1965, when a big steel strike was threatened, one steel magnate frankly expressed the opinion of the employers: "It should be a short strike. I don't think President Johnson, the way he' has been operating, will let it be anything but short." [86•1

p Although, on the whole, the ruling classes were satisfied with the labour policy pursued by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, the more reactionary circles of big business felt that it was not as decisive or effective as it could be. In 1963—especially after the successful strike by New York printers that lasted over 100 days, the longshoremen's victory in East Coast and Gulf Coast ports, and threatened strikes in the steel and railroad industries—the monopolies stepped up their demands for stronger repressions against the working class and the labour unions.

p In an effort to contain worker dissatisfaction with automation, unemployment and rising prices, and also to undermine the struggle of the working people for their economic and labour union interests, a group of ultra-Rightist senators introduced a number of bills in Congress in 1963, aimed above all at curtailing labour's right to strike. Among the authors of these bills were such well-known reactionaries as Senators McClellan, Eastland, Goldwater, Stennis, Ervin, Tower, Curtis, Thurmond and Bennett.

p A bill introduced in February 1963 by Senator McClellan, known for his hostile attitude toward labour unions, outlawed strikes by transportation workers in which more than one union local was involved or if the strike would seriously affect interstate commerce or foreign trade. Violation of the bill's provisions by rail, truck, air or water transport workers was punishable by a fine of $50,000 to be levied against the labour union and a year's imprisonment for the union leaders.

p Another bill introduced by McClellan outlawed any strikes at missile proving grounds and defence enterprises. This bill was an open attempt to ban worker action against the monopolies, since government defence orders are, as a rule, handled by enterprises belonging to the leading monopolies.

p Senator Dirksen introduced a bill prohibiting strikes by seamen on all oceangoing vessels. Labour disputes were to be regulated with the help of government agencies and through compulsory arbitration.

p A serious threat to labour unions was also posed by a bill introduced in 1963 by Senator Goldwater, the aim of which, according to Goldwater, was to curtail the excessive power of the labour unions. The bill gave the government new and even greater power to prevent strikes and outlawed the closed shop. Moreover, it contained a provision prohibiting unions from using their treasury funds for any purpose other than those indicated in their collective bargaining contracts. "In other words," it was noted at a convention of Brotherhood of Railway Carmen of America in September 1963, "the GOP-possible for President would prevent unions from defending themselves against all of the attacks in Congress . . . while employers would still have their powerful lobbies to press these same attacks and others." [87•1

p A prominent role in organising the anti-labour campaign was played by the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), the American Chamber of Commerce and the monopolies' press organs. Using the threat of stiff anti-labour laws, they demanded that the unions relinquish their most effective weapon—strikes. *The Wall Street Journal*, for example, warned that "if union leaders persist in wielding their power irresponsibly, they will have no one to blame for restrictive legislation except themselves." [87•2

p In its effort to get federal laws passed that would substantially limit the rights of labour unions, in 1962 the NAM worked out a three-year programme to curb union monopoly power. One of its aims was to ban both industry-wide and company-wide collective bargaining. It also sought to prohibit unions from establishing a national policy on wages and fringe benefits, and also prohibit industry-wide strikes. An important point in the programme was the demand for a law requiring unions to agree to the hiring of non-union workers. [87•3

p The NAM planned a broad anti-labour campaign to influence public opinion. Among the measures figuring in the "plan and timetable" of the NAM—a secret document that fell into the hands of the labour union and was reported in the labour press—were such points as: putting on a TV special programme on union "monopoly power" and getting sponsors for such a programme; recruiting "idea salesmen" in the campaign for various geographical areas of the country; sponsoring competitive contests among high school students (NAM awards would be given for the best composition on the topic, "What Union Monopoly Power Means to America"); setting up a group of "sympathetic journalists" who would work with the "Centre for the Study of Union Power"; putting out a "fully documented and objective movie" on union "monopoly power"; preparing a propaganda package against unions for women's clubs; compiling a "speaker kit" for businessmen and "opinion molders"; carrying on a special drive for the clergy. The NAM document, reported *The Worker*, bragged that many individuals active in the unfolding

programme "were appointed on the direct recommendations of leading senators and congressmen". [88•1

p The US Chamber of Commerce came out with similar proposals for stringent anti-labour legislation. A ten-point programme outlined by Ladd Plumley, the Chamber's president, amounted primarily to a demand for legislation making anti-trust laws applicable to labour unions, banning industry-wide contracts and further extending the compulsory open shop provision of Section 14b of the Taft-Hartley Act.

p Particular emphasis in the anti-labour campaign has been given in recent years to demands for legislation that would fetter the labour unions with a system of compulsory arbitration. After the long railroad dispute of 1959–1964, the US monopoly circles began working toward legislation requiring that all major labour-management conflicts be handled by a board of arbitrators, whose decisions would be binding. In October 1964, for example, the American Association of Ports Authorities proposed a law under which the US President could appoint an arbitration commission to 89 settle possible conflicts long before the current labour contract expired. [89•1

p Meanwhile, various employer organisations were recommending ways to prevent or "justly" settle labour disputes. At a convention of the North Atlantic Ports Association in May 1965, for example, it was suggested that a special federal court be set up to deal with labour relations problems on a permanent basis. It was envisaged that that court would render decisions, binding on both parties of a dispute, whenever negotiations, even with the help of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, fail. It was noted at the NAPA convention that having a special federal court deal with labour relations regulation was preferable to a system of compulsory arbitration because "compulsory arbitration had acquired a 'tained label'." [89•2

p At the beginning of 1965, the US Supreme Court upheld the application of anti-trust laws to areas not usually coming under the jurisdiction of these laws. It was a serious blow to the labour unions and the existing system of collective bargaining contracts. The Supreme Court held that unions could be prosecuted and be required to "compensate for losses" if a court determines that the wage, hour and working conditions terms of a collective labour contract are a " conspiracy" with employers aimed at squeezing competitors out of a given sphere of production. [89•3

p In practice, this meant that the system of the so-called model collective agreements, when unions conclude an agreement with one company or group of companies and then extend this "model" to all other companies in order to establish the same wage increase in all the enterprises of the given industry, could at any moment be classified as a " conspiracy" and illegal activity. The Supreme Court decision opened the door to arbitrary rulings, where, as Justice Goldberg said, "a judge or jury may determine, according to their own notions of what is economically sound, the amount 90 of wages that a union can properly ask for or that an employer can pay...." [90•1

p Between 1966 and 1971, a period in which there was an upsurge in the strike movement, the monopolies and their men in the US Congress carried on a new campaign for legislation to ban most, if not all, strikes. Thirty-five of the country's leading employer associations, headed by the US Chamber of Commerce, the NAM and the National "Right to Work" Committee, worked out a programme of "union reform". At the same time, they organised what *The New York Times* described as the same kind of propaganda campaign as preceded the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947 and the Landrum-Griffm Act in 1959. [90•2 The "union reform" programme called for removing settlement of labour-management disputes from the jurisdiction of the National Labour Relations Board and turning it over to special 15-man "labour courts" which would determine the legality of strikes and render binding decisions. [90•3 Moreover, the monopolies' objective was to extend anti-trust laws to cover labour unions whenever they, for example, support other striking unions, conclude collective agreements on an industrywide basis, combine the efforts of various unions within a particular industry during collective bargaining, etc. [90•4

p In early 1971, President Nixon asked Congress for more effective legislation to prevent strikes in the transport industries. Under his proposed legislation he would be able to extend the length of the cooling off period, take over the operation of some of the railways and appoint a neutral panel which would select "the best of the last offer made by either side in a dispute" as the final binding contract. Under the new law labour disputes on the railways and the airlines would no longer be dealt with under the Railway Labour Act but would come under the Taft-Hartley Act which governs disputes in other major industries. [90•5

p Frightened by the upsurge in the struggle of the working class for its vital interests and union rights, the reactionary 91 monopoly circles are prepared to go to any length to suppress the labour movement. Shunning no means, these circles have in recent years increased their use of private police and detective agencies, sent paid informers and stool pigeons into the unions for the purpose of compiling black lists in preparation for repressions against active union members and progressive labour leaders.

p Since the beginning of the 1960s an important role in the system of anti-union organisations has been played by an organisation working for the monopolies called the American Security Council (ASC), one of whose functions is to help employers check on employee loyalty, keep workers under surveillance and co-ordinate the activities of numerous investigation services operating throughout the country. Toward the end of 1960, a confidential letter written by Robert Galvin, president of Motorola, Inc., and an ASC board member (now its chairman), appeared on the pages of some American newspapers to reveal that over 1,000 companies were represented on the American Security Council. By February 1962, the organisation embraced over 3,000 companies. Many ASC officials are ex-FBI agents. The executive director, for example, is former FBI agent John Eason, and the chairman of the "planning committee" is Milton Ladd, once an assistant to FBI director J. Edgar Hoover.

p Each year the ASC black lists and dossiers on workers who "arouse suspicion" get bigger and bigger. In 1962, they contained the names of over 2,000,000 workers suspected of "subversive activities". According to instructions issued to ASC agents, anyone who expresses dissatisfaction with exploitation or anti-labour laws, or takes an active part in union activities should be classified as "suspicious".

p The 1960s also saw intensive anti-union activity by various ultra-Rightist organisations, financed and directed by influential groups representing US monopoly capital. Such reactionary organisations as the John Birch Society, the Liberty Lobby, We the People, the Minutemen, the Patric Henry Society, the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade, the American Nazi Party and many others, have stepped up their activity in recent years, openly advocating doing away with labour unions, destroying the labour movement and 92 adopting fascist methods of government. As one union paper, *The Advance*, noted in May 1967, "The Right wing spend millions annually, collected largely from big business, to campaign against unions". [92•1 Much of the money is spent on trying to frighten the public and disorient public opinion with propaganda to the effect that US labour unions have become "traitorous organisations", an "instrument of world communism". One example was a John Birch Society leaflet, entitled "USA in Extreme Danger. Help Destroy Communism", which said that "union leaders continuously push the workers to the polls with instructions to vote for Left-wing traitors who are selling America down the Red river. Many of today's most powerful union bosses, such as Walter Reuther and David Dubinsky have only one thing in mind. They want to convert America into a total socialist state, a necessary first step to establishing a communist state." [92•2

Direct intervention by the Democratic Administration in labour disputes, open use of executive power to help the corporations and to prevent or terminate strikes, widespread invocation of existing anti-labour laws and continuous efforts by the monopolies to get new anti-labour laws passed —all this has aroused growing discontent and increased resistance on the part of the union rank-and-file. Despite the fact that the Rightist leaders of the AFL-CIO, sticking to their conciliatory policy, have sought to preserve their alliance with the government and have refused to take decisive action in mobilising the working people for the struggle to defend their economic interests and union rights, the working people themselves have shown a growing militancy in resisting this anti-labour policy.

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TEXT SIZE

Notes

[69•1] *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties. Moscow, 1969*, Prague, 1969, *p*. 12.

[69•2] At the same time, some AFL-CIO unions refused to support Kennedy officially. Among them were the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, the Retail,

Wholesale and Department Store Union, and the Glass Workers Union, all traditionally oriented toward the Republican Party. The country's largest union, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America, as well as the independent and progressive United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union of the West Coast and the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers supported neither candidate. Explaining why his union was not supporting either candidate, ILW president Harry Bridges said that either would undoubtedly pursue an anti-labour policy when elected.

[70•1] *Proceedings of the Fifth Constitutional Convention of the AFL-CIO*, Second Day—November 15, 1963, p. 24.

[71•1] Hobart Rowen, *The Free Enterprisers: Kennedy, Johnson and the Business Establishment*, New York, 1964, p. 30.

[71•2] *The Worker*, December 25, 1960.

[72•1] *The Worker*, March 25, 1962.

[72•2] *Business Week*, March 25, 1961, p. 26.

[73•1] Lloyd Ulman, *The Labor Policy of the Kennedy Administration*, Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, Berkeley, 1963, p. 4.

[73•2] Ibid.

[73•3] William H. Miernyk, *Trade Unions in the Age of Affluence*, Random House, New York, 1962, p. 155; *23rd Biennial Convention. GEB Report and Proceedings. Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. AFL-CIO*, Atlantic City, New Jersey, May 14–18, 1962, p. 172.

[73•4] *Proceedings of the Eleventh Constitutional Convention of the United Steelworkers of America*, Miami Beach, Florida, September 17 to 21, 1962, p. 35.

[74•1] *Proceedings. 11 Biennial Convention. Textile Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO*, Chicago, May 30-June 3, 1960, p. 267.

[74•2] *Special Collective Bargaining Convention. Proceedings of the International Union, United Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)*, Detroit, Michigan, April 27 through 29, 1961, pp. 85–86.

[75•1] "Free and Responsible Collective Bargaining and Industrial Peace". From the Report to the President by the Advisory Committee on Labour-Management Policy, May 1, 1962, *Sourcebook on Labor*, p. 259.

[75•2] "Taft-Hartley Act on National Emergency Strikes", Title II, Sec. 208, 209, *Sourcebook on Labor*, pp. 242–43; "Free and Responsible Collective Bargaining and Industrial Peace", *Sourcebook on Labor*, p. 259.

[75•3] "Free and Responsible Collective Bargaining and Industrial Peace", *SonrcL'book on Labor*, p. 260.

[75•4] "The Taft-Hartley Act on National Emergency Strikes", Title II, Sec. 205(b), *Sourcebook on Labor*, p. 241.

[76•1] A panel of this kind was first set up in 1947 by President Truman. However, after attempts to avert a national steel strike in 1949 failed, it virtually ceased to exist.

[76•2] *The Worker*, June 4, 1963, p. *'2*.

[76•3] *'I'lie Wall Street Journal*, February 13, 1961, p. 1.

[76•4] *The New York Times*, February 8, 196T>.

[77•1] Ibid., April 14, 1962.

[77•2] *UAW Solidarity*, April 1963; *WD Bulletin*, April 1963.

[78•1] There are many mediation and conciliation organisations, boards of arbitration and committees of various kinds operating in the country helping the government to implement anti-labour legislation. On the basis of the Taft-Hartley Act alone, 22 such committees are currently functioning in the USA. Among the permanent organisations of this nature are the National Labour Relations Board, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service and various arbitration associations. The American Arbitration Association alone used the services of 14,000 arbitrators in 1,800 counties in 1965 (*The Christian Science Monitor*, February 23, 1965).

[78•2] *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 26, 1965.

[78•3] "New Pressures on Collective Bargaining. Selected Addresses from the Conference Held in San Francisco." Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, Berkeley, May 25, 1962, p. 23.

[79•1] *The American Federationist*, November 1965, p 7.

[79•2] *Pulp and Paper Worker*, December 1963, p. 8.

[79•3] *The Worker*, November 18, 1962, p. 9.

[81•1] "Compulsory Arbitration". Department on Labor and Political Education, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, 1964, p. 4.

[81•2] *People's World*, May 2, 1964.

[82•1] *The Worker*, May 10, 1964.

[82•2] *The Washington Post*, December 11, 1963.

[82•3] *The Wall Street Journal*, April 28, 1964.

[82•4] *The Mew York Herald Tribune*, April 1, 1965.

[83•1] *World Marxist Review*, March 1967, p. 18.

[83•2] *The Worker*, October 4, 1966.

[85•1] *Time*, March 1, 1968, p. 24.

[85•2] *Political Affairs*, February 1967, p. 55.

[85•3] *Fortune*, January 1966, p. 123.

[85•4] *The New York Times*, November 20, 1964,

[86•1] *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 24, 1965.

[87•1] *Brotherhood of Railway Carmen of America. Proceedings of the Twenty-Third Convention*, Kansas City, Missouri, September 3-13, 1963, p. 238.

[87•2] Quote from: *The Advance*, February 15, 1963.

[87•3] *The New York Times*, October 7, 1962; *Electrical Workers Journal*, November 1962.

[88•1] *The Worker*, October 14, 1962; *The Dispatcher*, November 30, 1962.

[89•1] *The New York Times*, October 30, 1965.

[89•2] Ibid., May 13, 1965.

[89•3] *RWDSU Record*, February 7, 1965; *US News & World Report*, June 21, 1965, p. 101.

[90•1] *US News & World Report*, June 21, 1965, p. 105.

[90•2] *The New York Times*, December 10, 1967.

[90•3] *Labor Today*, February-March 1967, p. 16.

[90•4] *The Dispatcher*, May 10, 1968; July 30, 1969.

[90•5] *The Economist*, February 13, 1971, p. 46.

[92•1] *The Advance*, May 15, 1967.

[92•2] "USA in Extreme Danger. Help Destroy Communism", Research Information Bureau, 1S4 Gurficld Avenue, Mineola, New York, p. 2.

LABOUR UNION DISSATISFACTION WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S SOCIAL POLICY. THE LABOUR UNIONS' MAIN ECONOMIC DEMANDS

p The AFL-CIO leadership, having given the Democratic Party crucial support in the 1960 presidential election, 93 expected that the promises made by Kennedy during the election campaign would be fulfilled. Rightist labour leaders kept telling their union rank-and-file that in the person of the new president and his administration they had acquired true friends who understood the needs of working people and who were favourably inclined to their demands. It soon became clear, however, that the promises to improve the economic situation were in large part dictated by the desire to win votes. The widely publicised New Frontiers programmes took the form, primarily, of a series of legislative measures having a limited objective—to overcome the recurrent crisis of overproduction.

p At the same time, the Kennedy Administration, fearing an intensification of public dissatisfaction, also agreed to a certain expansion of social legislation, which could be viewed as a partial concession to the working people. A number of laws were passed directly or indirectly connected with job training and retraining, and laws providing for a slight increase in the minimum wage, and increase in assistance to persons living in areas of chronic depression, and a temporary lengthening of the period over which unemployment insurance benefits could be paid. A government ruling (made in January 1962) also officially recognised the right of federal employees to organise and their right to collective bargaining. [93•1 Although the Kennedy Administration's social policy was a step forward in comparison with the policy pursued by the Eisenhower Administration, it was, on the whole, quite limited and failed to deal with the basic problems facing the working class. The administration rejected a major union demand for a shorter workweek and even sought to keep wages from going up by introducting socalled guidelines.

p The country's union rank-and-file were clearly disappointed in such a policy. Soon—in December 1961—due to pressure from below, an AFL-CIO convention adopted a resolution criticising the government for taking inadequate steps to fight unemployment. Three months later, in February 1962, the AFL-CIO Executive Council, again in response to pressure from below, decided to send to Kennedy a 94 delegation made up of seven top labour leaders, headed by George Meany, to express labour's dissatisfaction with the administration's activity. During that meeting, Kennedy assured the delegates that the administration would pay closer attention to union demands. In early 1963, during its winter session in Florida, the AFL-CIO Executive Council again decided to seek a meeting with the President. The union leaders agreed among themselves that they should tell Kennedy in private about their disappointment with respect to the administration's "soft proposals" aimed at bolstering the economy. [94•1

p The only real chance of winning concessions from the administration in the social sphere (as progressive unions had frequently pointed out) was through the organisation of

broad public and organised labour movement pressure on the government. However, the AFL-CIO's ruling clique, striving to preserve and strengthen its alliance with the government and not wishing to enter into a conflict with President Kennedy, did everything possible to adapt to his policy. Commenting on this fact, American sociologist Daniel Bell wrote: "The Labour leaders have easy entry to the White House. They love the status and the attention that the drive up the curving road to the White House door brings. But it is widely felt that, in consequence, they have also become captives of the administration and have lost their capacity for independent action." [94•2 And *The New York Times*, describing the prevailing sentiments within the AFL-CIO leadership, wrote that most of the labour leaders sincerely sympathised with the President, that some of them were afraid that he was overly sensitive to criticism. They dared not risk hurting his feelings because they wanted to stay in the good graces of the White House.

p To maintain their influence with the membership, the Rightist labour leaders, of course, had to speak out in favour of such traditional worker demands as a reduction in the workweek, higher wages and better working conditions. Nonetheless, they failed to take decisive action toward these ends.

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p The labour policy enunciated by Lyndon Johnson (after President Kennedy's assassination in November 1963) largely coincided with the policy of his predecessor. As the presidential election approached, Johnson began to play up to the trade union leadership. [95•1 In his message to Congress in January 1964, he advanced a number of programmes (the war on poverty, expansion of the system of worker retraining, youth employment, social welfare and social security improvements, etc.) that were essentially an expanded variety of Kennedy's proposals, but with a larger dose of social demagogy.

p In the 1964 presidential election, frightened by the reactionary and openly anti-labour platform of the Republican Party and its candidate, Goldwater, the US labour unions advocated "unconditional" support for Johnson. Quite characteristic and reflecting the sentiments and hopes of many labour leaders was the assessment of the election results made by the president of the International Typographical Union, Elmer Brown, who said that the labour movement was proud that it played a decisive role in defeating the anti-labour forces and electing new, liberal people to the House of Representatives and the Senate. The unions, he said, had every right to expect that their needs would now be taken into consideration. [95•2

p The strong labour support given Johnson during the 1964 presidential election noticeably strengthened the "alliance", which had begun to deteriorate in the last year of Kennedy's 96 presidency, between the Democratic Administration and the AFL-CIO leadership. Through his assistant Lawrence O'Brien, Johnson expressed his thanks "for labour's political help" and promised to fulfil a number of labour's demands, including the demand that Section 14b of the Taft-Hartley Act be repealed. [96•1 "To a greater degree than ever before in the history of this country," said Meany at an AFL-GIO conference in Washington on January 11, 1965, "the stated goals of the Administration

and of Congress, on the one hand, and of the labour movement, on the other, are practically identical." [96•2

p However, it became clear very soon after the election that President Johnson and the liberal "friends" of labour in Congress had no intention whatever of meeting their commitments. As noted in *The Christian Science Monitor* on January 13, 1965, "AFL-CIO, which worked hard for President Johnson's election, is far from satisfied with what the administration has done or what it has proposed". Thus the labour union leadership, under constant pressure from the rank-and-file membership, had more and more frequently to express open dissatisfaction with the Johnson Administration's policy. In October 1965, George Meany said that the AFL-CIO cannot agree with the cynical notion that election platforms are built only for use during elections and then to be forgotten and discarded.

p The AFL-CIO Executive Council, meeting in Miami Beach in February 1966, came out with strong criticism of the Johnson Administration. "If the administration doesn't make recommendations acceptable to labour," it was noted at that meeting, "we will make our own way." [96•3 In March 1966, at a conference of the construction workers' union held in Washington D. C., Meany made a similar statement to the effect that labour unions are independent of either political party. *The New York Herald Tribune* took this to mean that labour had decided to withdraw the support it had traditionally given the Democratic Party. [96•4

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p Immediately after the February meeting of the AFL-CIO Executive Council, Secretary of Labour Willard Wirtz, expressing the administration's reaction to such AFL-CIO statements, said at a press conference that he was "terribly concerned" with what he called the "apparent development of antagonism" between the unions and the Johnson Administration. He claimed it could become an obstacle to passage of labour legislation and rupture a relationship that brought some social legislation in the past. [97•1

p Despite the constant complaints made by labour leaders about individual congressmen and even about the Johnson Administration, neither Meany nor the AFL-CIO Executive Council group had any intention of breaking up their " alliance" with the Democratic Party. On the contrary, trying everything possible to strengthen it, Meany's group hoped that by giving unconditional support to the administration's aggressive foreign policy, and particularly the dirty war in Vietnam, it could win certain concessions for the unions.

p But as subsequent events showed, their hopes were not justified. The administration's anti-labour policy, the steady rise in prices, the growing tax burden, cutbacks in appropriations for non-military objectives, and the curtailment of the Great Society and War on Poverty programmes because of the escalation of the Vietnam war, all this evoked growing dissatisfaction among the working people. There was mounting criticism aimed not only at the administration but also at the conciliatory union leadership for its

passiveness and unwillingness to lead the struggle of the masses to achieve their major economic objectives.

p As we mentioned earlier, labour dissatisfaction with the Democratic Administration's policies was prompted by a number of things, chief among which were the President's persistent efforts to hold wages down with the help of socalled guidelines, the administration's and Congress's open antagonism to union policy on a shorter workweek and higher minimum wage and the administration's failure to fulfil its promise to repeal Section 14b of the Taft-Hartley Act.

p The business of setting guidelines for wage increases was first introduced by President Kennedy in 1961–1962. This 98 initiative, according to the well-known bourgeois economist John Kenneth Galbraith, "was, perhaps, the most important innovation in economic policy of the administration of President John F. Kennedy. In the earliest days of administration, it was agreed among those concerned with economic policy that some special mechanism for restraint would be required were there to be a close approach to full employment". [98•1 It should be noted that among those connected with the implementation of the Democratic Party's economic programme, an important role was played by Galbraith himself, who had for a number of years advocated setting up "public machinery for restraining wage and price increases" as the "only hope for handling the wage-price spiral". [98•2

p In line with these ideas, a report by the President's Council of Economic Advisers stressed in 1962 that "the general guide for non-inflationary wage behaviour is that the rate of increase in wage rates (including fringe benefits) in each industry be equal to the trend rate of overall productivity increase". [98•3 Thus, establishment of wage guidelines became the official economic policy of the Democratic Administration for the following years. Speaking at a UAW conference in May 1962, President Kennedy personally set forth the "anti-inflationary formula" under which the unions were supposed to display "social responsibility" and refrain from asking for wage increases above the 3 per cent per year ceiling recommended by government economists. "Unjustified wage demands which require price increases," Kennedy told the convention, "are equally as contrary to the national interest as are unjustified profit demands which require price increases." [98•4

p The administration's "anti-inflationary formula" actually turned out to be aimed against satisfying the just economic 99 demands of the working class, while in no way restricting the growth of monopoly profits. Kennedy let businessmen know that their concern with maintaining profit margins was shared by the government. Speaking to the US Chamber of Commerce, he stated that "to the extent that you want to protect your profit margins, our interests are identical, for after all we in the national government have a large stake in your profits." [99•1 The government's attempts to limit " unjustified wage demands" were aimed primarily at the interests of the most organised sections of the working class who were engaged in a hard struggle with the monopolies to win wage increases exceeding the national average. As for the millions of unorganised or poorly organised workers, the government's guidelines did not envisage wage increases for them at all.

The idea apparently was that the overall national wage increase level for workers should be, as a rule, lower than that established by the guidelines.

p The machinery for restraining wage increases proposed by Kennedy was put to wider use under Johnson. In 1964, 1965 and 1966, the President's Council of Economic Advisers set the ceiling for annual wage increases at 3.2 per cent. [99•2 Despite strong pressure from the government and the President himself, however, the AFL-CIO Executive Council and AFL-CIO conventions refused to recognise the national guidelines. [99•3

p The labour leaders' unanimous condemnation of the government's attempts to limit wage increases is explained above all by the aggravation of class antagonisms and the increased militancy manifested in recent years by the union rankand-file. Even the reactionary union leaders who openly supported the government's aggressive policy in Vietnam did not dare to ask the members of their organisations to make sacrifices for the sake of that war, and in particular to embrace a policy of wage restrictions.

p On January 25, 1966, at Johnson's initiative, a meeting took place between some of the President's economic 100 advisers and AFL-CIO representatives in which an attempt was made to persuade the latter to support the government's guideline of a 3.2 per cent ceiling for wage rises. The union representatives, however, declared their opposition to such a policy, calling it a "political manoeuvre" designed to restrict union demands during contract negotiations with employers. AFL-CIO president Meany pointed out in his statement that a ceiling on wage increases was unjustified because the government was doing nothing to curb the rise in prices and profits. [100•1

p Indeed, the Johnson Administration's restrictive machinery operated only in one direction, that of freezing workers' wages, for, as a rule, the American monopolies simply ignored the guidelines for keeping prices at a stable level. The big corporations steadily raised prices on steel, nonferrous metals, chemical raw materials and goods, agricultural raw materials and foodstuffs, etc.

p As a result, American workers were caught in the vice of the government's policy of artificially freezing wages and the steady rise in the cost of living which resulted from price increases instituted by the industrial and agricultural monopolies. [100•2

p While Johnson's Administration was trying to keep wage rises for working people below the 3.2 per cent level it had established, the salaries of government employees and high government officials went up appreciably. In 1967, Congress gave federal employees a 4.5 per cent pay hike and servicemen a *5* per cent raise, costing the American taxpayers an additional five billion dollars a year. In January 1969, Johnson signed a bill increasing the President's salary (by 100 per cent), and a little later, substantial salary increases went to US Congressmen as well as the Vice-President and the House Speaker (from 40 to 50 per cent and more). 101 Commenting on these increases, the labour newspaper *The Dispatcher*, wrote: "Imagine if we in labour asked

for anything like that—how they would howl and accuse us of being responsible for inflation. But they don't seem to mind inflating their own wages one damn bit!" [101•1

p In early May 1966, Johnson unexpectedly called a meeting of the President's Committee on Labour-Management Policy, which had been inoperative for over two years. He told the committee that "disquieting signs" were beginning to appear in the economy and asked the panel for its "views and constructive suggestions" on such "critical problems" as the effectiveness of his programme of "voluntary restraint" and the role of labour and management in implementing it. The "disquieting signs" he mentioned first of all were that wage increases were "substantially above" prior years and that consumer and wholesale prices had also risen. [101•2

p In calling a meeting of this committee, which had worked under Kennedy to foster class co-operation, Johnson hoped to win union support for the government's guidelines. But his hopes were not realised; all seven labour representatives on the committee (including Meany, Reuther and Dubinsky) were strongly opposed to the guideposts, which they considered unfair to unions. [101•3 Interestingly enough, even some committee members not connected with unions had reservations about the notion.

p Failing to win the committee's support, Johnson switched to direct threats. On August 25, 1966, the day after an AFLCIO Executive Council decision on the need for substantial wage increases in view of the "inflation of profits", Johnson warned the unions that the government might have to "take other measures" if they do not keep their wage demands within "reasonable bounds". [101•4

p Despite government threats and the monopolies' antiunion propaganda, the unions boldly ignored the government's restrictive guidelines in negotiating new collective agreements. Standing up for their vital interests and 102 refusing to make sacrifices for the sake of the dirty war in Vietnam, workers in many leading industries won greater wage increases than envisaged under the government's guidelines. In the autumn of 1964, the UAW concluded an agreement with the giant General Motors, Ford and Chrysler corporations providing for wage increases of 4.8 to 5 per cent. When General Motors refused to meet the just demands of the workers a general strike was called which ended in a significant victory for the workers.

p A collective agreement signed in 1964 between the progressive independent International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers and Kennecott Copper, Anaconda and American Smelting and Refining gave the workers an annual 4 per cent wage increase. Substantial wage increases were also won in the maritime, the construction, aluminium, cement, glass and other industries. In the first half of 1965 alone, over 1,200,000 workers won wage increases of 4 per cent or more.

p Worker opposition to the government's guidelines policy became even stiffer in 1966. Especially noteworthy that year was a victory scored by New York's transport workers, which evoked strong displeasure in government circles. Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers Gardner Ackley called the agreement, which provided for wage

increases far exceeding 3.2 per cent, "clearly inflationary" and not "in the public interest". [102•1

p Another labour victory came in the summer of 1966 after a 43-day strike by 35,000 members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers. Worker solidarity in this hard-fought battle forced the owners of five leading air transport companies to sign a new labour contract with the union calling for wage increases of 5 per cent per year.

p Resolute working-class opposition to the national wageprice guidelines finally forced the Johnson Administration in 1967–1968 to move the guideline ceiling on wage increases to 5 per cent. However, most unions continued to set as their primary goal wage increases of no less than 6 to 8 per cent.

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p In 1969, the Nixon Administration set forth its own programme for fighting inflation. But, although guidelines were abandoned, and despite repeated statements to the effect that the new strategy for fighting inflation did not include wage or price controls, the Republican Administration called on working people to practise “self-restraint”. In October 1969, President Nixon personally exhorted union leaders to look at the situation realistically and to show restraint on the wage front. Thus, although the new administration at first did not put the former emphasis on the unworkable guidelines mechanism, it nonetheless demonstrated its resolve to continue applying pressure on the unions to prevent the growth of wages.

p In early 1971, however, the Nixon Administration made a sharp turn away from its repeatedly promised course of non-intervention in wage and price policy. In February, Congress, with active prompting by the administration, extended for another two years a previously passed measure giving the President the power to freeze wages and prices. And, shortly thereafter, the government placed a limit on wage rises (a top limit of 6 per cent per year) in the construction industry. A special board was created to regulate wage levels established by collective agreements. If the unions refused to agree to the fixed wage level, the government threatened to withdraw building contracts and not to recognise the “inflationary” wage rates. "Opposed on principle to government intervention in private wage and price decisions,” wrote the magazine *Business Week*, "Richard Nixon nevertheless took two more steps ... that add up to active intervention on a scale as great as anything undertaken by John F. Kennedy or Lyndon Johnson.” [103•1 In the following months, the Nixon Administration went considerably further in this direction. On August 16, 1971, the President officially proclaimed national state of emergency and came out with a programme of currency and economic measures designed to save the dollar and strengthen the economy. One of the programme’s main points was a nationwide 90– day price and wage freeze. The President called on unions to co-operate with the government and the monopolies and, 104 above all, to abandon all strike activity. Thus, the government adopted a policy that for two and a half years the Nixon

Administration had rejected as contradicting the basic principles of the Republican Party, which believed in the free play of market forces.

p The struggle against stiff government guidelines was directly connected with the US working class's struggle for a higher guaranteed minimum wage. Although in 1961, under Kennedy, an amendment to the Fair Labour Standards Act raised this minimum from $1.00 to $1.25 per hour, this did not bring any substantial improvement in the situation of the working class. Moreover, over 17,000,000 wage earners in low-paid categories were not covered by the law. [104•1

p At the Fifth Constitutional Convention of the AFL-CIO in November 1963, Meany declared that the "minimum wage itself, $1.25 an hour in this country today is a disgrace.... It is impossible to live in any part of the country, not only the big cities, on that amount—-This convention without question should declare for a higher, a substantially higher minimum wage and start a campaign to work for it". [104•2 The convention set a minimum wage of $2.00 an hour as the goal toward which unions should strive. As noted in a special AFL-CIO statement, this increase was needed "simply to assure low-paid job holders a standard of living above the poverty level". [104•3

p The three-year struggle to raise the minimum wage finally ended in passage on September 24, 1966—on the eve of the congressional elections—of a law under which the minimum hourly wage would go up from $1.25 to $1.40 from February 1, 1967, and from $1.40 to $1.60 from February 1, 1968. The law covered an additional 8,000,000 workers, including some 6,000,000 working in the service industries and retail trade and, for the first time in US history, nearly 400,000 agricultural workers whose minimum wage became $1.00 an hour from February 1, 1967 and $1.30 from February 1, 1969.

p The unions regarded the measures under the new law as inadequate, or as George Meany put it, "very, very small". About 11,000,000 workers were still not covered and the increase for those that were was by and large offset by the rising cost of living. The AFL-CIO had expressed its dissatisfaction with the bill when it was being debated in Congress in March 1966, and had stated then that the labour movement would have to take "independent action" to get the minimum wage raised to $2.00 an hour.

p The conciliatory leadership of the AFL-CIO subsequently frequently reaffirmed, in word, its resolve to fight for the $2.00 an hour minimum wage; however, it failed to take concrete steps to organise any independent actions or to launch a national campaign.

p The 1960s saw an upsurge in the fight for a shorter workweek at the same weekly pay. The demand to reduce the workweek became prominent especially after the 1954 recession, when more and more workers and labour leaders began to come to the conclusion that this might be the best way to combat unemployment. It was brought out at the 17th National Convention of the Communist Party of the USA held in December 1959, that "the fight for the shorter workweek has, therefore, become the number one

economic objective in the fight for jobs and security. A cut in the workweek cannot, any more than any other measure, provide a fundamental solution of job security under capitalism. But it is at least a significant measure of protection against the steady trend toward elimination of jobs." [105•1

p The Democratic Administration and President Kennedy personally strongly opposed any cut in the workweek. In early 1961, Kennedy declared that "the forty-hour schedule is necessary if we are going to continue economic growth and maintain our commitments at home and abroad". [105•2 A few years before that, Lyndon Johnson had objected to reducing the workweek in even stronger terms. In 1957, when he was a Senator from the State of Texas, he told labour leaders after the first Soviet sputnik was launched, "Candour and 106 frankness compel me to tell you that in my opinion the 40-hour week will not produce missiles." [106•1

p At first, the AFL-CIO Executive Council did not even include the demand for a shorter workweek in the programme it submitted to the Kennedy Administration after the election. But two months later, in March 1961, George Meany, addressing a convention of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees' and Bartenders' International Union in Philadelphia, said that he had come to the conclusion that the only way to provide jobs for the greatest number of unemployed was through a reduction of the workweek. This switch by the AFL-CIO president and other labour leaders, who had firmly held that a longer workweek was necessary to win the cold war, was very significant. It reflected the growing dissatisfaction in US labour unions with the government's ineffective efforts to eliminate chronic depression and reduce the vast army of unemployed. The union rank-and-file were pressing their leaders to display genuine leadership in the struggle to improve the economic position of the working people and, above all, to ensure some kind of job security. Between 1959 and 1961, as a result of such pressure, many leading unions (United Auto Workers, United Steelworkers, Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Ladies Garment Workers, United Radio and Electrical Workers, International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union of the West Coast, Chemical and Atomic Workers, Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers and many others) officially proclaimed their goal to be a shorter workweek with no reduction in pay. [106•2

p Despite continued assurances by union officials that they would give the Kennedy Administration "full and wholehearted support", the AFL-CIO's Fourth Constitutional Convention, held in December 1961, called upon affiliates "to give the highest priority to the search for and negotiation of ways to reduce hours of work to assure adequate job 107 opportunities now and in the future". [107•1 No specific indication was made of how great a reduction should be sought. The main emphasis was made on a proposal calling for flexible adjustment of the workweek depending on the rate of unemployment and the extent to which the labour force is used. Congress was urged "to devote immediate attention to the legislation necessary to provide adjustments in the standard workweek without loss of pay consistent with the economic needs of the Nation and the national objective of a fullemployment economy". [107•2 The convention also defined certain

ways in which worktime could be reduced: longer paid vacations, more paid holidays, controlled overtime, introduction of an earlier retirement age, etc.

p The AFL-CIO convention stand on a shorter workweek was met with hostility not only by employers but even by the leading officials of a "friendly" administration. [107•3 An intensive bourgeois propaganda campaign was launched to instill in the minds of the working people that a shorter workweek would not be in their interest since it would result in a sharp rise in prices, cause inflation and in the long run have a disastrous effect on the national economy. Multimillionaire Henry Ford, president of the Ford Motor Company, in a statement to the President's Advisory Committee on Labour-Management Relations, said that reducing the workweek was "not only a poor remedy, it is also a harmful one; for it would retard the growth needed for the safety and welfare of our nation at this point in its history". [107•4

p Assertions of this kind by representatives of monopoly capital and their apologists were countered by progressive American economists who showed how a reduction of worktime would have a positive effect on the economy by increasing the number of jobs available, reducing unemployment and increasing labour productivity, all of which, in turn, would assure production growth.

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p A month after the AFL-CIO convention, New York City's Local 3 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers concluded an agreement under which the workday for 9,000 electricians was reduced from six to five hours a day with a basic 25-hour workweek. As a result, 1,280 new jobs were created, which meant a 14 per cent increase in the number of workers employed. [108•1

p In April 1962, two other New York unions—the plumbers' and bricklayers'—also demanded a shorter workweek—25 and 34 hours respectively. And in June, the International Longshoremen's Association of the East Coast, representing 60,000 dock workers, set forth its demand for a 30-hour workweek.

p A short time later—in October 1962—at a convention of the United Steelworkers of America, one of the country's largest unions, the main emphasis was made on reduction of worktime as the only effective way to combat the rising unemployment rate. A report to the convention delegates noted: "We must resign ourselves to a declining work force in Steel, or gird ourselves to meet the challenge of full employment in our Industry. Full employment in Steel cannot be attained without a shorter workweek or without a reduction in annual hours worked by each employee." [108•2 The convention voted in favour of carrying out an active campaign for a 32-hour workweek.

p A broad movement for a shorter workweek was thus under way. Many unions were now making concrete proposals with respect to hours of work and were expressing their readiness to fight for their implementation. Under these circumstances, the AFL-CIO Executive Council adopted a resolution on August 13, 1962, declaring the struggle for a

35-hour workweek to be the primary task of labour unions and calling for a national movement to achieve this goal. [108•3

p A statement adopted at that session of the AFL-CIO Executive Council read, in part: "The time has come for a basic change in the fundamental terms of employment in the 109 United States. One certain answer to the problem is to spread the work by reducing the hours each worker devotes to his job, measured either by the week or the year, while maintaining his total earnings. A shorter work period without a reduction in take home pay is the answer America needs; an answer that is more urgent since alternative solutions have been shelved. We intend to achieve that goal.... We intend to proceed simultaneously along two paths—to win both a statutory shorter workweek and a contractual shorter workweek—-We intend to achieve changes in the Fair Labour Standards Act to provide penalty pay of double time for all hours worked over 35....” [109•1

p The American press called the AFL-CIO statement of August 13, 1962, a "vote of no-confidence" in the ability of the Kennedy Administration to solve the problem of unemployment. At its Fifth Convention in the autumn of 1963, the AFL-CIO reaffirmed its intention to launch a national campaign for a shorter workweek.

p However, despite repeated assurances of their firm resolve to begin the struggle, the Rightist leaders in the American labour movement still failed to take any decisive action to break down monopoly and government opposition. Even with this break with the Kennedy Administration, wrote progressive American economist, Joseph M. Budish, the AFLCIO leadership was clearly incapable of freeing itself from a deep-rooted, antiquated and fruitless orientation, from the obsolete methods and organisational forms of its activity.

p Union officials actually let this important campaign take its own course. Thus, labour waged an unco-ordinated struggle for shorter work periods and full employment, working primarily toward inclusion of various guarantees in individual contracts. Some unions—the International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union of the West Coast, the typographical, the garment workers’, the New York electricians’ unions and others—won a shorter workweek, but in many branches of the economy, especially in those with the greatest number of workers, the monopolies, with government support, flatly rejected all demands for shorter work periods.

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p Despite the conciliatory stance of top AFL-CIO officials and passive leadership in many unions, rank-and-file union members themselves began to come out more and more actively and persistently with demands for a reduced workweek. At a UAW Convention in May 1966, for example, this demand was included in the collective bargaining programme for 1967, but only under heavy pressure from delegates representing many of the union locals. [110•1

p In the struggle of the US working class in the present period another important condition for ensuring employment and reducing exploitation is satisfaction of union demands to expand their rights in establishing "work rules", output standards, control over intensification of labour processes, etc. Many big conflicts in recent years revolved precisely around such problems.

p For example, the hard fight waged for almost five years by the railway workers' unions was aimed primarily against plans by the railroad companies to change the "work rules" that had existed before then and to reduce the number of workers in train crews, which entailed mass layoffs of firemen and other workers.

p A big and hard-fought strike by East Coast dock workers in early 1965 was also a union effort to prevent employers from reducing the size of work crews. Many more examples of this kind of working class action could be cited.

The policy pursued by the monopolies and the US Government in opposing the major demands of the working class— for more jobs, higher wages, a shorter workweek, better working conditions, etc.—has inevitably led to a further intensification of the class struggle. In the course of their struggle for their vital interests the great masses of rank–andfile union members are acquiring an ever greater understanding of the urgent necessity for greater unity in labour's ranks, and at the same time are giving notice to conciliationminded union officials who try to divert the growing class struggle into channels that pose no danger to the ruling circles.

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TEXT SIZE

Notes

[93•1] *Trade Union News*, March 8, 1963.

[94•1] *The New York Times*, February 23, 1963; *Trade Union News*, March 8, 1963.

[94•2] *The Observer*, October 20, 1963.

[95•1] Before he was elected to the vice-presidency in 1960, Johnson had not been considered a "friend" of labour. As Kenneth O'Donnel, a close assistant to John Kennedy during the 1960 presidential campaign, wrote in his memoirs, the AFL-CIO leaders strongly objected to Lyndon Johnson as the vice presidential candidate (*Life*, August 31, 1970, pp. 55–56). The unions well remembered that he had a long list of anti-labour actions behind him. In 1947, Johnson voted to override President Truman's veto of the Taft-Hartley Act; in 1952, he voted in favour of taking stiff action against striking steelworkers; and in 1959, as Senate majority leader, he worked hard to push through Congress the toughest provisions of the Landrum-Griffin Act. On the whole, between 1949 and 1960, Johnson voted 30 times against bills that the labour unions wanted to see

passed. (*The Worker*, April 21, 1968; *Labor and American Politics*, Ed. by Charles M. Rehmus and Doris B. McLaughlin, The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1967, p. 426.)

[95•2] *The Typographical Journal*, December 1964.

[96•1] *US News & World Report*, January 25, 1965, p. 91.

[96•2] *The New York Times*, January 12, 1965.

[96•3] *The Worker*, February 27, 1966.

[96•4] *The New York Herald Tribune*, March 22, 1966.

[97•1] *The Worker*, February 27, 1966, p. 3.

[98•1] John Kenneth Galbraith, *The New Industrial State*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1967, p. 256.

[98•2] John Kenneth Galbraith, *Ambassador's Journal. A Personal Account of the Kennedy Years*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1969, p. 22.

[98•3] "Guidelines for Non-Inflationary Wage and Price Decisions". From the 1962 Report of the Council of Economic Advisers, *Sourcebook on Labor*, p. 271.

[98•4] *18th Constitutional Convention. Proceedings. International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)*, Atlantic City, New Jersey, May 4-10, 1962, p. 375.

[99•1] *New Pressures on Collective Bargaining. Selected Addresses from the Conference Held in San Francisco*, p. 34.

[99•2] *Economic Report of the President*, January 1967, p. 123.

[99•3] *US News & World Report*, March 15, 1965, p. 82; *Free Labor World*, February 1968, p. 23.

[100•1] *The New York Times*, January 26, 1966.

[100•2] In this connection, one union newspaper, *Steel Labor*, wrote in March 1966: "A major defect in the wage-price guidelines ... is that they do not hold down prices. For most of the past five years, average wage increases have lagged behind productivity growth. At the same time prices have continued to rise. Under the guidelines, therefore, working people have lost out both ways—in lagging wages and in rising prices."

[101•1] *The Dispatcher*, February 7, 1969.

[101•2] *The New York Times*, May 5, 1966.

[101•3] Ibid.

[101•4] *The New York Times*, August 25, 1966, p. 18.

[102•1] *Political Affairs*, February 1967, pp. 55–56.

[103•1] *Business Week*, February 27, 1971, p. 34.

[104•1] *UE News*, March 9, 1964.

[104•2] *Proceedings of the Fifth Constitutional Convention of the AFLCIO*, First Day—November 14, 1963, p. 31.

[104•3] *Fair Labor Standards*. AFL-CIO Legislative Department, Fact Sheet, No. 4, 1965.

[105•1] *Political Affairs*, February 1960, p. 35.

[105•2] William Francois, *Automation: Industrialization Comes of Age*, Collier Books, New York, 1964, p. 118.

[106•1] *The New York Times Magazine*, September 20, 1964, p. 38.

[106•2] *AFL-CIO News*, April 1, 1961; *Political Affairs*, May 1961, p. 16; *Report of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Convention— International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers*, Montreal, August 31, September 1-4, 1959, p. 97.

[107•1] William Francois, *Automation: Industrialization Comes of Age*, p. 119; *Labor Fact Book*, No. 16, pp. 78–79.

[107•2] *Labor Fact Book*, No. 16, p. 79.

[107•3] *ILR Research*, New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, 1964, No. 1, p. 19.

[107•4] William Francois, op. cit., pp. 120–21.

[108•1] *The Worker*, September 2, 1962.

[108•2] *Proceedings of the Eleventh Constitutional Convention of the United Steelworkers of America*, Miami Beach, Florida, September 17 to 21, 1962, p. 50.

[108•3] *The Worker*, September 2, 1962.

[109•1] Ibid.

[110•1] Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man. Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, Boston, 1964; Herbert Marcuse, *Essay on Liberation*, Boston, 1969.

CHAPTER III
NEW TRENDS
IN THE US LABOUR MOVEMENT

THE STRIKE MOVEMENT AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

p Monopoly capital's widespread attack on the working people's standard of living met with growing resistance on the part of the working class in the 1960s. The working people's struggle to satisfy their material and social needs increasingly took the form of massive strikes in which the participants displayed great determination, unity and solidarity. The sharp confrontations between labour and capital in recent years have thoroughly refuted the contention of bourgeois ideologists and Rightist union bureaucrats that the class struggle is dead in the United States; they have shown, on the contrary, that class antagonisms continue to develop and deepen.

Events over the past few years have also blasted the spurious theories of certain Left-wing radicals to the effect that the US working class has gone "bourgeois", has lost its revolutionary potential and has become a "conservative and even counter-revolutionary force". The groundlessness of such notions put out by theorists (one of whose fashionable representatives is American philosopher Herbert Marcuse [111•1) of "revolution without the working class" is clearly seen in the active struggle of the working class and the upsurge in the strike movement in the main citadel of capitalism. The 112 following table shows how the strike movement has grown in the last decade [112•1 :

Year Number of strikes Workers involved (in thousands) Man-days idle (in thousands)
1961 3,367 1,450 16,300 1962 3,614 1,230 18,600 1963 3,362 941 16,100 1964 3,655 1,640 22,900 1965 3.9S3 1,550 23,300 1966 4,405 1,960 25,400 1967 4,595 2,870 42,100 1968 5,045 2,649 49,018 1969 5,700 2,481 42,869 1970 5,600 3,300 62,000

p As we can see from the above, the strike movement showed a marked upward trend beginning with 1964, both in the number of strikes and the number of workers involved. According to Department of Labour statistics, not since 1953 had the country witnessed such an upsurge in the strike movement as it did in 1970. Nearly 163 million man-days were "lost" as a result of labour conflicts between 1964 and 1968, as compared with 139 million between 1959 and 1963, and 124 million between 1954 and 1958. [112•2

p Protracted and unyielding strikes have become characteristic in recent years, with an unprecedented average duration of no less than 22 days. [112•3 An important indicator of the growing scope of the struggle being waged by the American working class is the increase in the number of strikes in which 1,000 or more workers are involved. In 1966, there were 321 big strikes of this kind, involving two-thirds of all striking workers that year and also accounting for approximately two-thirds of the man-days lost. [112•4 In 1970 the trend toward mass strikes was even stronger.

p The growth of the strike movement in the 1960s is especially significant. It took place under conditions that were extremely unfavourable for the working class as the patently strikebreaking role of the government increased, as both the Democratic and Republican administrations actively intervened in the economic struggle, as the anti-strike provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act were invoked with increasing frequency and as the danger of new anti-labour legislation mounted. Workers were under the constant threat of losing their jobs for taking part in labour conflicts.

p Yet, despite all these negative factors, and despite the policy of class co-operation pursued by reactionary labour leaders, the working class of the United States demonstrated that the role of strikes as a major weapon in the economic struggle was not diminishing in the least. This could be seen above all in the increasingly wider range of demands made and the deepening social substance of strikes.

p The major strike demands in the period under consideration were: higher wages and fringe benefits; expansion of the retirement system and a lower retirement age; reduction of the workweek; preservation and extension of the rights of union organisations at enterprises; improvements in labour protection and safety engineering; recognition of labour unions and maintenance of normal conditions for their functioning. Whereas in the second half of the 1950s the union demands were for employment and job security to protect workers against the threats posed by automation and introduction of new technology, the strike movement in recent years, while still involving these demands, has concentrated more and more on wage demands. The reason for this has been the rapidly mounting cost of living and the growing tax burden resulting from the escalation of the Vietnam war.

p Following is a review of some of the most significant actions taken by the American working class, in which the characteristics of the strike movement were most clearly in evidence.

p A sharp conflict arose in June 1961 between the owners of 850 American merchant ships and five unions representing over 80,000 seamen. After more than one month of 114 fruitless negotiation, the seamen declared a strike that tied up 300 Atlantic, Pacific and Gulf ports. The conflict arose when the shipowners refused to meet union demands that collective bargaining conditions be extended to cover seamen sailing on ships owned by US companies, but flying foreign flags (Liberia, Honduras, Panama). This system of using "false flags" hits American seamen hard, for wages on such ships are some 25–30 per cent of those on regular ships, while working conditions are substantially harder. The government came to the aid of the shipowners by promptly declaring the strike to be a threat to the national welfare and security and, on the basis of the Taft-Hartley Act, prohibited it.

p This move, made with the silent consent of the union’s bureaucracy, showed the real class essence of the government’s "new labour policy”. It was a direct warning to the US

working class that the Kennedy Administration, despite its promises to look "favourably" on labour's just demands, was prepared to take extreme action whenever the interests of the monopolies were threatened.

p In February 1961, 74,000 pilots of the six leading airlines went on strike in 44 states for higher wages and to secure union rights. In September, there was a strike involving 239,000 workers in 92 General Motors plants, and in October, a strike by 116,000 Ford Motor Company workers in 26 states. The auto workers' union demanded better working conditions and an increase in wages and fringe benefits.

p In February and March 1962, 11,000 auto workers in six states staged a strike that lasted for 26 days. The conflict arose when the employers decided to delay putting a wage increase agreement into effect. In May and June 1962, 95,000 workers in the building trades in Northern California, Detroit, and Spokane (Washington) struck for 57 days for higher wages. A strike by 16,000 workers in the aluminium industry demanding increases in vacation pay, pensions and unemployment insurance benefits, embraced 22 plants of the Aluminium Company of America and Reynolds Metals.

p Distinguished by its militancy was a strike by 75,000 longshoremen and warehousemen in the East Coast and Gulf ports. The strike was scheduled to begin on October 3 1962, 115 but was stopped for cSO days by a court injunction (on the basis of the Taft-Hartley Act). On December 23, when the 80-day period was up, the workers renewed the strike, paralysing all ports from Maine to Texas. After 35 days of stubborn struggle and despite the fierce resistance of the employers, worker demands for a wage increase and employer contributions to an employee medical care programme were partially met.

p The end of 1962 and the beginning of 1963 were marked by a 114-day strike of about 20,000 typographical workers which brought publication of New York's leading newspapers to a standstill. The strike, called against the Publishers Association of New York City (for the first time in its 65 years of existence), brought into sharp focus certain features characteristic of the strike movement under present circumstances. It was an example of how, with the advent of automation and the technological improvements which lead to mass layoffs, this form of struggle was beginning to be utilised by certain segments of the working class that had rarely resorted to it before.

p This strike, which had wide repercussions throughout the country, was precipitated by the publishers' attempts to introduce certain technical improvements and new working conditions that would have entailed a substantial cutback in employment. The New York Printers Union refused to sign the contract, insisting in turn that it include such points as a substantial pay hike, a 15-minute reduction in worktime for every shift (which would give the workers a 35-hour workweek), increases in employer contributions to workers' social and pension funds, layoff compensation benefits and an increase in the number of days of paid sick leave. The employers decided to fight the workers in concert: as soon as the strike hit *The New York Times, The Daily News, The Journal American* and *The World Telegram & Sun*, the publishers of five other newspapers—*The New York Herald Tribune, The New York Mirror, The New York Post, The Long Island Press* and *The Long*

Island Star Journal—declared a lockout. Long before the strike, members of the New York Publishers Association had set up a mutual assistance fund to be used in breaking down worker resistance in the event of a strike. The lockout was an effort to split the ranks of 116 the workers by setting ofl those who were thus forced ofl the job against those who were striking. As noted in the *Record*, a newspaper with a circulation of 1,000,000 copies put out by the strikers, the publishers' tactics was aimed at bleeding the union financially by prolonging the strike and forcing the workers to return to work without having their demands met.

p But the typographical workers opposed the employers' united front with a powerful weapon—the class solidarity of working people. Nine other unions, who were at the time negotiating with the American Publishers Association, supported the printers. Backing the strikers was the International Typographical Union, at whose initiative a decision was taken to assess all 115,000 members of that union in an amount equal to 3 per cent of their wages to augment the New York printers' strike fund.

p The government, siding with the employers, did everything it could to stop the printers' strike. The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service and the Department of Labour headed by Labour Secretary Willard Wirtz, endeavoured to impose unfavourable agreement terms on the striking workers and put pressure on the union officials, accusing them of bringing the negotiations to a dead end. Even President Kennedy joined the anti-union campaign. At a Washington press conference on February 21, he strongly criticised the position taken by the head of the New York printers, Bertram Powers, calling his demands "extortionate". "It is clear," Kennedy said, "in the case of the New York newspaper strike that the local of the International Typographical Union and its president, Bertram Powers, insofar as anyone can understand his position, are attempting to impose a settlement which could shut down several newspapers in New York." [116•1 Kennedy proposed turning the dispute over to an " impartial" court of arbitration or, in other words, to resolve the conflict by compulsory arbitration. Replying to the President on behalf of the striking workers, Bertram Powers stated that his union would oppose compulsory arbitration in whatever form it might be proffered.

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p The workers' firm resolve to fight to win, the powerful support coming from many other unions and the militant strike leadership finally broke the united front of the publishers. On March 31, on the 114th day of New York's longest ever printers' strike, the employers agreed to accept the workers' basic demands. The new contract gave the printers wage and fringe benefit increases over the next two years amounting to $12.63 a week, as well as a 35-hour workweek.

p Among the other big strikes of 1963 we should mention the 71-day strike in the lumber and woodworking industry, involving about 29,000 workers; the strike by 20,000 construction workers in the St. Louis area; the strike in the meatpacking industry at enterprises of the big Swift and Armour companies; the 82-day steel strike at Dow

Chemical plants in Illinois; and the 129-day strike by 2,500 printers in Cleveland. The main issue in all these actions was higher wages.

p The strike movement grew markedly in 1964, with 19 strikes as compared with only seven in 1963, involving 10,000 or more workers. The largest and of most far-reaching importance was the United Auto Workers' strike against General Motors, which closed down 89 of that company's 130 plants and involved 260,000 of the 350,000 workers employed by this giant US corporation. [117•1

p "The nearly six-week shutdown ... of General Motors must be described as the most prolonged and biggest ' wildcat' strike against American industry since the sit-downs of the turbulent thirties," wrote B. J. Widick in *The Nation*. "Neither the auto industry, nor Walter Reuther nor the Johnson Administration wanted or expected the walkout." [117•2 This statement reflected the true state of affairs, because the biggest strike in the auto industry was called at the insistence of the union rank-and-file and lesser union officials. On September 25, the union locals at the various General Motors plants voted overwhelmingly to reject a proposed collective agreement submitted to them for approval. It was significant that in this case the union leadership showed greater 118 understanding than in previous years of the sentiments of the bulk of the union members and let the locals make their own demands to management at the local level. This shift in the positions of the central leadership, which in a similar situation in 1961 had ordered its locals to call off a strike, was a direct result of the changes that had taken place in the US labour movement over the preceding three years.

p The demands presented to management by the locals included giving workers a bigger role in setting production quotas, improving working conditions, distribution of overtime work, on-the-job discipline and in hiring and firing procedure. The nearly 18,000 grievances presented by the union organisations to the company's representatives concerned local issues at the company's various plants. *The Worker* noted at the time that the main objective in the strike was not connected with wages; it was a strike against inhuman treatment of people, a strike to win respect for people's labour. The newspaper said it was the culminating point in a revolt against the oppressive prison atmosphere prevailing at most General Motors plants.

p The militant strike of the auto workers, lasting from September 25 to October 26, ended in victory, forcing the company to meet the basic demands of the workers. The union won an additional one week's paid vacation, two additional paid holidays, a 12-minute work break increase for production line workers, retirement at the age of 50 for workers with 30 years seniority, larger pensions and other fringe benefits. [118•1 A union statement, issued after the strike, read in part: "UAW are proud of the progress made in the 1964 negotiations. The economic gains were greater than those ever made by an industrial union in the United States in a single set of negotiations. Equally important, however, is the deep and lasting impression that will be left upon the industry by the fact that, in the face of those large economic gains, UAW members struck and the UAW spent millions of dollars to 119 win improved working conditions and an increased measure of dignity on the job." [119•1

p In November, UAW locals called a strike at many Ford Motor Company plants to force the company to meet demands having to do primarily with day-to-day production line problems. This strike, which lasted 17 days and involved about 80,000 (of the 135,000) Ford Motor workers, also ended in a significant union victory, when the auto workers concluded an agreement with the Ford Motor Company similar to the one concluded with General Motors. It should be noted that the strikes against General Motors and Ford accounted for nearly one-third of all the man-days "lost" due to strikes in 1964.

p Stubborn battles were fought on other fronts in 1964, such as those involving 8,000 coal miners in Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia, 10,000 public schoolteachers in Utah, and 10,000 Illinois Central railway employees, to name a few.

p The year 1965 was also marked by a number of significant actions taken by the American working people. In January and February, New York City's Welfare Department employees struck for 28 days in what was the country's first major strike by municipal employees. An important feature of this strike was that it involved public employees, who in 25 states are prohibited by law from striking. Under the Condon-Wadlin Law in the state of New York, any municipal employee taking part in a strike is subject to dismissal and a fine equal to two days' wages for every day on strike, and also loses his right to pay increments for the following three years.

p Although the strike was declared illegal, 6,000 Welfare Department employees were determined to fight for higher pay and better working conditions. Neither the arrest of 19 union officials, nor the malicious anti-union propaganda campaign in the newspapers could crush the strikers' resistance. Moreover, they were supported by many other unions, with sizeable sums coming into the strike fund from New York's electricians', teachers', seamen's, retail clerks' and other unions.

p The strikers' courage and steadfastness paid off. New York's Welfare Department employees received a pay hike and, the Condon-Wadlin Law notwithstanding, no one was fired.

p Another important event in 1965 was the 55-day strike by 60,000 longshoremen in Atlantic and Gulf Coast ports. Over the preceding 11 years, the East Coast longshoremen had gone on strike five times in an effort to prevent layoffs due to automation. When in October 1964, contract negotiations between the Shipowners Association and the International Longshoremen's Association came to an impasse, the longshoremen again had to call a strike. But on Johnson's insistence, it was immediately called off for 80 days as provided for by the Taft-Hartley Act.

p In early January 1965, when the cooling off period expired, the government and the shipowners applied strong pressure on the union's officials to prevent a renewal of the strike. The latter signed an agreement containing a big concession to the employers: in exchange for certain wage and vacation gains, the shipowners would have the right to

reduce the size of work crews from 20 to 17 men. The union's president, Thomas Gleason, and his closest assistants tried to persuade the workers to accept the new contract, calling it "the best in the history of the union". [120•1 However, the longshoremen thought otherwise; they voted overwhelmingly to reject the contract. The ensuing strike, which shut down all the ports from Maine to Texas, was another indication of the deepening rift between the conciliatory union leadership and the rank-and-file. The striking longshoremen had to repulse not only the onslaught of the shipowners, who with the government's help were trying to break the strike which was costing them $ 67 million a day, but also pressure coming from their own union officials. With the aim of splitting the ranks of the workers and intimidating their families, tens of thousands of letters, signed by Gleason and eight other top union officials, were mailed to the strikers' homes, urging them to accept the contract and return to work. [120•2 However, all such efforts were unsuccessful.

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p Seeing that the strikers were adamant, President Johnson intervened, calling the strike "unjustified" and bemoaning the "injury to the economy" resulting from the shutdown. He set up a committee comprised of the Secretary of Labour, the Secretary of Trade and Senator Morse, which was given 24 hours to work out the terms of an agreement. Under great pressure from the White House and the threat of adverse court rulings, the strikers, after almost two months of struggle, were forced to return to work having won only certain guarantees against layoffs.

p A 64-day strike in the summer of 1965 by East Coast merchant seamen was also an attempt to prevent job reduction. Despite government intervention aimed at stopping that "costly" strike, the seamen returned to work only after the shipowners agreed to a number of their major demands, including a substantial pay rise. Although the question of the makeup of ships' crews was turned over to a government committee for consideration, the union reserved the right to call a strike if the committee's decision did not meet with the workers' satisfaction.

p Among the major labour actions in 1965 were a 36-day strike at the Aerojet-General Corporation in Southern California, a strike by 10,000 West Coast dock workers, a newspaper strike in New York and a big strike against the Boeing Aircraft Company.

p The strike movement continued to grow in 1966. That was the year of the biggest strike in the history of US civil aviation. Involving 35,400 airplane mechanics in five leading airlines, the strike lasted 43 days and paralysed 60 per cent of the country's domestic airline service. The International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, which led the strike, listed among the workers' demands wage increases, paid vacations and improvements in retirement and medical insurance programmes. The strike ended in a notable victory for the workers.

p A strike by members of the American Newspaper Guild and nine other unions, which began on April 24 and lasted for 140 days, was the biggest and longest strike in the

history of the US publishing industry. It broke out when over 2,000 of the 57,000 employees of three New York newspapers—*The New York Journal American, 'The New York World 122 Telegram and Sun* and *The New York Herald Tribune*—were laid off after these newspapers merged to form a single newspaper, *The World Journal Tribune*. The strike was staged to prevent arbitrary dismissals that did not take into account seniority, and to win higher severance pay. Through hard struggle the unions won partial satisfaction of their demands.

p More pronounced in 1966 than in previous years was the growing tendency for public employees to strike. The most significant among strikes of this order was the 12-day walkout in January of 33,000 New York City transit workers, which brought bus and subway service to a standstill. Since the strikers were municipal employees, the authorities invoked the provisions of the Condon-Wadlin Law against them. Michael Quill, president of the Transport Workers Union of America, and five other union officials were arrested for refusing to comply with a court order banning the strike. "It's about time some one, somewhere along the road in labour ceased to be respectable," Quill said. "Many generations of good Americans before us took this road. If they didn't take this road, half of us would be home on relief." [122•1 Quill's resolute stand was an inspiration to the strikers. Repressions against the workers and reprisals taken against their militant leaders roused the indignation of New York's labour union community. The workers stiffened their resistance even more, forcing the municipal authorities to retreat. The transit workers won a substantial pay raise, and the Condon-Wadlin Law received a fatal blow. Under the terms of the strike settlement, the municipal authorities gave up attempts to fine the union $ 322,000 for every day of the strike, and none of those participating in the strike were subjected to any kind of punishment.

p The New York transit workers' militant strike became the forerunner of a series of strikes by municipal employees in other cities. In the summer of 1966, Kansas City firemen staged a four-day strike for a shorter workweek. A similar strike took place in Atlanta, where 500 of the city's 726 firemen quit the union when union officials began pressuring the strikers to return to work. The firemen even ignored a court order to that effect. In Ohio, there was a sanitation workers' 123 strike; in New York, a nurses' strike at city hospitals; and in Indiana, a strike of Welfare Department employees. An indication of the increased frequency of strikes by the huge contingent of working people in the services field is the fact that in Michigan there were more strikes by municipal employees in 1966 than in the preceding 17 years.

p The strike movement, on the upswing in 1966, assumed even greater proportions in 1967, when labour contracts involving over 3,000,000 workers were due to expire in many key industries, including the auto, aircraft, rubber, textile and building industries. The extent to which the class struggle had mounted could be seen in the first months. "It hasn't taken long for 1967 to live up to its billing as a year of labour turmoil," wrote *US News & World Report.* [123•1

p Workers at an auto body building plant in Mansfield, Ohio, struck twice since the beginning of the year, paralysing car assembly operations at 86 General Motors plants.

Among the major labour actions that year was the teamsters' strike in eight cities that took place in April. After bringing negotiations to a dead end, the employers resorted to a lockout affecting 250,000 drivers. Three days later, however, when the lockout precipitated a general strike of 550,000 truck drivers, the owners were forced to give way. The union (International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America) won a more than 6 per cent increase in wages and fringe benefits. On April 21, 50,000 workers in three (of the country's five) biggest rubber companies—- Goodrich, Firestone and Uniroyal—went on strike, to be joined later by 26,000 workers in the other two companies, General Tire and Goodyear. The United Rubber Workers of America, citing the huge profits the companies had made in 1966, demanded wage increases and other benefits. The strike which lasted for more than three months—the biggest strike in the history of the rubber industry—ended in a victory for the workers. The first half of 1967 also saw strikes by construction workers in Wisconsin, railway workers on the Butte Anaconda and Pacific Railway; 7,500 employees of New York's welfare administration; and by many other segments of the US working class.

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p Highly notable was the fact that 18,000 members of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, demanding pay increases and payment for overtime, carried out the first strike in the 30-year history of that union. Walking out in sympathy with the strikers were television technicians, cameramen and producers, radio broadcasting engineers and technicians and other groups connected with television. The strike, which lasted from March 23 to April 10, ended in a union victory.

p Teachers' strikes in New York City and Detroit, and in the states of New Jersey, Florida, Kentucky and Illinois, had wide repercussions. In September, 49,000 (out of a total of 58,000) New York City public schoolteachers were out on strike for 14 days. Repressive actions were taken against them on the basis of the Taylor Anti-Trust Act. The president of the New York local of the American Federation of Teachers was jailed, and the union was fined $ 150.000. [124•1 But even these extreme measures did not break the strike. The city officials were ultimately compelled to at least partially satisfy the teachers' demands for pay increases and certain improvements in the educational system. A ten-day strike by 11,000 schoolteachers in Detroit was also successful, resulting in a 10 per cent pay raise, increased classroom space in 50 schools in the city's predominantly black districts, etc. [124•2

p The militant strikes by members of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists and public schoolteachers in many states, as well as other strikes by engineers and technicians and federal and municipal employees, illustrated the growing trend toward active struggle by white-collar workers. [124•3 In his report of June 10, 1967 to the National Committee of the Communist Party of the USA, Gus Hall said: "Wartime prices, rents and taxes have forced new sectors of the population to take the working-class path of joining unions and to use working-class weapons of struggle. More and more teachers, nurses, hospital workers, social workers, civil servants and lower-paid white-collar 125 workers have hit the bricks." [125•1 The active involvement in the

strike movement of these large categories of working people corroborates the conclusion drawn in the Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union that "large sections of the office workers and a considerable section of the intelligentsia, whom capitalism reduces to the status of proletarians and who realise the need of changes in the social sphere, become allies of the working class." [125•2

p In the spring and summer of 1967, the attention of the entire country was centred on a dispute between 137,000 railway workers (the mechanics', boilermakers', electricians' and three other unions) involved in locomotive and rail-car repairs and servicing, on the one hand, and the owners of 132 railroads, on the other. The railway workers were demanding wage increases to offset the sharp rise in the cost of living over the previous two years.

p When in April negotiations broke down completely because of the owners' inflexible stand, the workers set a strike deadline. A strike threatening to paralyse 95 per cent of the country's railroad operations alarmed the government. President Johnson promptly proposed legislation forcing an extension of the strike deadline. The bill passed both the House and Senate on April 11. On three occasions in the following three months, Congress, acting on Johnson's proposals, adopted special resolutions aimed at delaying the strike.

p The State Department and the Pentagon actively joined the anti-labour campaign. In June, Secretary of State Rusk and Secretary of Defence McNamara sent memoranda to the President expressing "deep concern" regarding the impending railroad strike. In his memorandum, Rusk noted that the movement of supplies and equipment to US troops in Vietnam depended in large measure on the functioning of domestic rail transportation, and that, therefore, it was absolutely necessary that the domestic rail transportation system operated at full capacity in what he described as the present critical period in US foreign relations. McNamara, for his 126 part, citing the opinion of Pentagon experts, wrote the President that in view of the Vietnam war and the Middle East crisis, a rail strike would be a real evasion of responsibility to the country.

p Despite the tremendous pressure applied by the owners, the administration and Congress, the railway workers went on strike on July 16. But the strike—the largest rail strike in the last 20 years—did not last long. The President and Congress pushed through a new law interdicting the strike and turning the dispute over to compulsory arbitration. Under this law passed on July 18, the railroad magnates were in effect granted the right to dictate the terms of an agreement. "It is a sad day for American workers when Congress becomes the nation's No. 1 strikebreaking agency," said vice-president Joseph Ramsay of the International Association of Machinists. [126•1

p September and October were marked by arduous class battles in the auto industry. On September 7, the UAW called a strike against the Ford Motor Company when the company refused to meet the union's demands (wage increases proportional to company profits, improvements in working conditions, increased unemployment insurance benefits

and equal pay for US and Canadian workers) during negotiations on the next three-year contract.

p This was the tenth nationwide strike in the auto industry in the last three decades. The 49-day strike, involving 160,000 workers at 94 plants of the Ford empire in 26 states, was, on the whole, successful. Ford Motor was forced to sign a three-year contract granting annual wage increases of from 6 to 7 per cent, larger pensions, increased benefits to workers laid off by the company, longer rest periods during the workday and other gains. At the same time, some union demands, such as expanding the rights of shop stewards and for certain improvements in working conditions, remained unmet. Even after the collective agreement as a whole was ratified, however, the struggle did not end; workers at many plants continued the strike, demanding settlement of local issues.

p Displaying unparalleled resolve and tenacity, 60,000 127 workers in the copper industry conducted a nine-month strike (from July 1967 to April 1968) in 22 states. The big Kennecott Copper, Anaconda, Phelps Dodge and American Smelting and Refining companies had refused to meet demands made by 26 unions on behalf of their members for higher wages and improved retirement and other benefits. The strike (the longest strike embracing an entire industry in US history) shut down 90 per cent of the country's copper mines and nearly all of the smelting and refining plants. The companies, relying on their large reserves of copper, tried to break the strike through economic pressure, reckoning that they could starve the workers into submission. But their hopes were not realised. By the end of March 1968, members of other unions had contributed over $ 1,000,000 to the strike fund and were giving the strikers all-round assistance and support. The exceptional steadfastness of the strikers and the solidarity with their courageous fight shown by the entire organised labour movement forced the companies to negotiate contracts granting many of the unions' demands.

p Special mention should also be made of the strike by nearly 250,000 American Telephone & Telegraph workers, the 10-week teachers' strike in New York City and strikes by city employees in New York and Memphis.

p Labour union activity continued to intensify in 1969. A vivid example of the sharp confrontation between labour and capital was the 101-day East Coast and Gulf coast longshoremen's strike, involving 75,000 workers. The strikers sought an agreement that would preclude any substantial reduction in the number of longshoremen working in the ports, despite wide-scale mechanisation of loading and unloading operations. In the oil refining industry 60,000 workers in 25 states of the country struck for higher wages and improved social security benefits and better working conditions. The strike shut down scores of refineries which produce more than two-thirds of the gasoline and other liquid fuels in the United States. An exceptionally militant strike took place against the General Electric Co., involving 150,000 workers and paralysing 280 enterprises in 130 cities. Among the other groups striking that year were 40,000 miners in West Virginia, American Airlines mechanics, teachers in New Jersey 128 and Los Angeles, city employees in New Orleans, Scranton and Evansville, and hospital workers in Charleston, South Carolina.

p Throughout 1969, the new Republican Administration actively intervened in labour-management relations and applied various repressions against the unions. For example, in early October, a strike by 120,000 railway workers was terminated on orders from President Nixon, who turned the dispute over to a special board of arbitration.

p In 1970, the strike movement in the United States reached a record level, comparable only to the two previous high peaks in 1919 and 1945–1946. Outstanding among the strikes that year were the strike by 350,000 auto workers in 31 states against the General Motors Company, the strike by 300,000 railway workers, and the hard-fought strike by postal workers.

p The railway dispute continued throughout the year. Twice —in February and in September—the government, with the help of court injunctions, succeeded in preventing a strike that threatened the country's economy. At the end of the year, their demands for higher wages and other benefits still unmet, the railway workers struck. But this powerful strike on 150 railroads did not last long. On President Nixon's insistence, Congress quickly passed a bill ordering postponement of the strike. A federal court pronounced a fine of $ 200,000 for every day the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks continued the strike beyond the cutoff date. It is noteworthy, that Congress and the federal court both justified their strikebreaking decisions on the grounds that the strike created an "emergency situation" and was detrimental to the country's "war effort", thereby confirming the direct link between the government's reactionary socioeconomic policies and its aggressive foreign policy.

p In the spring of 1970, for the first time in the 196-year history of the US postal service, a postal workers' strike broke out. Involving 160,000 post office employees in 200 cities, this strike, which erupted against the wishes of the union officials, was in direct violation of laws denying federal employees the right to strike. The government declared a national state of emergency (for the first time since the Second World War), and US Army and National Guard troops were 129 brought in to carry out the functions of the postal workers. However, neither the extreme measures taken by the government nor the appeals by the union leaders to terminate the strike had any effect. The postal workers agreed to return to work only after they were granted a substantial increase in wages and the government pledged that no action would be taken against the participants in that "illegal" strike.

p The marked upsurge in the strike movement since 1966 was the consequence of heightened activity by rank-and-file union members in opposition to the new attack on the vital interests of working people by the monopolies and the government.

p The upswing in the struggle of the US working class was particularly significant in that it took place against the background of the continuing war in Vietnam and rampant chauvinism, under conditions when "the resistance of the monopoly forces to economic demands is now a resistance marked by a wartime arrogance", [129•1 when the government, to please big business, stepped in with increasing frequency to break strikes and took every possible action to curtail the fundamental rights of labour unions.

p The strike movement and its growing intensity are an indication of the growth of the working peoples' class– consciousness and their resolve to defend their fundamental rights and interests. Today, as in the past, most of the conflicts between labour and capital are economic in nature. This form of class struggle has always predominated in the United States. It has been a powerful force opposing heightened exploitation and reduction in the living standard of working people and has played a tremendous role in the workers' attainment of tangible socio-economic gains. ".. . Social reforms," Marx wrote, "never come about as a result of weakness in the strong, but always as a result of strength in the weak." [129•2 Economic strikes are still of prime importance in the fierce day-to-day struggle waged by workers against monopoly rule.

p However, the intensive development of state-monopoly forms of capitalist oppression makes it increasingly clear to 130 working people that economic strikes, however important and valuable they may be, are no longer enough, that the monopolies today enjoy to a greater extent than ever before the full and open support of the government. The progressive strata of the working class are becoming increasingly convinced that it is impossible to countervail this united front of monopoly capital and government and to win the satisfaction of their vitally important demands without combining economic struggle with political struggle, and without fighting for democratic rights and actively opposing the government's reactionary domestic and aggressive foreign policy. In his time, Lenin pointed out that the labour movement "can be strong only by defending the interests of the working class completely and in every way, by engaging in economic struggle against capital, a struggle inseparably bound up with a political struggle against the servants of capital". [130•1

The trend toward interlacing economic and political struggle increased markedly in the 1960s. Many strike actions taken by the American working class were aimed not only against the policy of specific monopolies, but also, in essence, against the government as an aggregate capitalist reflecting the overall will of the monopoly oligarchy. Among such strikes were labour actions against the government's policy with respect to a shorter workweek, against wage freezing through the imposition of guidelines, against curtailment of the right to strike, against introduction of compulsory arbitration, and against certain pressures exerted on unions and strikers. This observable and growing trend toward the politicalisation of the US working class's economic struggle will unquestionably lead to more frequent and sharper confrontations between the labour movement and the entire system of state-monopoly capitalism and will raise the struggle of the working people to a higher political level.

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TEXT SIZE

Notes

[111•1] *The Worker*, May 29, 1966.

[112•1] *Monthly Labor Review*, June 1971, p. 135.

[112•2] It should be borne in mind that official US statistics do not take into account time lost as a result of so-called wildcat strikes not sanctioned by union officials.

[112•3] *Political Affairs*, September 1968, p. 17.

[112•4] *Monthly Labor Review*, August 1967, p. 39.

[116•1] Guy Talese, *The Kingdom and the Power*, An NAL Book, New York, 1969, p. 312.

[117•1] *The New York Times*, September 26, 1964.

[117•2] B. T- Widick, "Prototype for More Conflict", *The Nation*, November 10, 1964, p. 349.

[118•1] "Agreement Between General Motors Corporation and the UAWAFL-CIO." Effective November 10, 1964. Supplemental Agreement Covering Pension Plan, Insurance Program, Supplemental Unemployment Benefit Plan, Exhibits A, B, and C.

[119•1] "UAW's 1964 Gains", *UAW International Affairs Department*, Washington, p. 3.

[120•1] *The New York Times*, February 11, 1965.

[120•2] *The New York Herald Tribune*, January H, 1965; *The New York Times*, January 18, 1965.

[122•1] *The Worker*, February 20, 1968.

[123•1] *US News & World Report*, April 17, 1967, p. 97.

[124•1] *The Worker*, February 9, 1968.

[124•2] Ibid., October 10, 1967.

[124•3] There were 201 strikes by federal and municipal employees in 1967, as compared with 34 in 1960 (*Political Affairs*, September 1968, p. 25).

[125•1] Gus Hall, *For a Meaningful Alternative, Report to the June 10, 1967 Meeting of the National Committee of the Communist Party, USA*, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1967, p. 30.

[125•2] *'the Road to Communism, Moscow*, p. 483

[126•1] *The Montreal Star*, July 18, 1967.

[129•1] Gus Hall, *For a Meaningful Alternative*, p. 28.

[129•2] K. Marx, F. Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 4, S. 306.

[130•1] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1. p. 331.

THE REVOLT OF THE UNION RANK-AND-FILE

p Manifesting itself ever more clearly in the 1960s was the trend toward a further swing to the Right by the reactionary 131 labour leader clique united around George Meany. At the same time, however, activity among rank-and-file union members also grew as dissatisfaction with the labour bureaucracy's policy of class collaboration mounted.

p In the United States, where there is no influential conciliatory Social-Democratic party to speak of, the reactionary union bureaucracy has been and still is the main carrier of opportunism in the labour movement. It is utilised by the monopolies and the state as a force for stunting the growth of class-consciousness among workers and for ensuring " cooperation" between labour and capital.

p Explaining the emergence of a rather large labour bureaucracy in capitalist countries, Lenin wrote back in 1917: "Under capitalism, democracy is restricted, cramped, curtailed, mutilated by all the conditions of wage slavery, and the poverty and misery of the people. This and this alone is the reason why the functionaries of our political organisations and trade unions are corrupted—or rather tend to be corrupted—by the conditions of capitalism and betray a tendency to become bureaucrats, i.e., privileged persons divorced from the people and standing *above* the people.

p "That is the *essence* of bureaucracy; and until the capitalists have been expropriated and the bourgeoisie overthrown, *even* proletarian functionaries will inevitably be 'bureaucratised' to a certain extent." [131•1

p In pursuing their reactionary labour policy objectives, the US ruling circles bank heavily on the labour bureaucracy, using a variety of means to bribe and corrupt it. In recent years, particularly during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, the fusion of the labour bureaucracy with management, with government apparatus and with the entire system of state-monopoly capitalism, has grown even stronger. Top labour leaders have been drawn considerably more frequently into co-operation with the government and big business in all kinds of federal, state and local agencies and in various committees and panels that spring up in increasing numbers in connection with the government's mounting intervention in labour relations. "Through their relationship to the federal administration," Gus Hall noted in a report 132 to the National Committee of the Communist Party on June 10, 1967 "these labour leaders have become instruments within the state-monopoly capitalist set-up. This relationship has become a means by which labour leaders can be used in the interests of monopoly. Labour leaders who would not want to serve the interests of the big corporations directly do so nevertheless by becoming closely tied to the administration—to a state apparatus that serves the interests of these very same corporations. The same applies to labour leaders who serve monopoly interests by working with their direct instrument, the CIA." [132•1

p The Rightist labour leaders are open supporters of the capitalist system. As noted in a special report by a mission of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), "in contrast to

numerous labour movements in Europe and other parts of the world, the US unions, far from advocating a profound reform of the system, do not even envisage it, despite the harsh conflicts that oppose them to the capitalists." [132•2 AFLCIO president Meany, in his testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee in 1963, openly outlined his credo, a credo which many other US labour leaders share. "I think to apologise for the capitalist system is probably the greatest sin that any American can commit...." he told the congressmen. "I believe in the capitalist system just as much as anyone in this room. This economy we have in this country is a capitalist economy and the trade union movement is part of this economy and is part of this system. I make no apologies for being part of this system." [132•3 Such oaths of loyalty and devotion uttered by labour bosses of Meany's ilk are examples not so much even of reformism as of conformism with respect to capitalist society and its economic, political and ideological foundations.

p Defending the position of the ruling classes, labour leaders say that workers and capitalists have common interests. Repudiating class struggle and advocating "co-operation" between labour and capital, reactionary labour leaders 133 zealously support, and even propose, various plans for " establishing and maintaining industrial peace" through "mutual trust" and "human relations". A view expressed more and more frequently in recent years is that strikes—the tested fighting weapon of the proletariat—have become obsolete, that they have lost their meaning and have become merely a "local" weapon. Steady advances in automation, introduction of new technology into production and changes in the nature of the labour process, says, for example, AFL-CIO vice-president Joseph A. Beirne, who is also president of the Communications Workers of America, make management "less susceptible to strikes". Therefore, the unions, he says, "will be wise to use the strike less frequently". [133•1 Many other leaders in the AFL-CIO take a similar stance. Speaking to reporters on his 76th birthday in September 1970, George Meany said: "We find more and more that strikes really don't settle a thing. Where you have a well-established industry and a well-established union, you're getting to the point where a strike doesn't make sense." Therefore, added the titular head of the AFL-CIO, "I can say to you quite frankly that more and more people in the trade union movement—I mean at the highest level—are thinking of other ways to advance without the use of the strike weapon." [133•2

p Instead of using the strike weapon the top labour boss proposed relying on so-called "voluntary arbitration" to regulate labour disputes.

p One of the characteristic features of the cumbersome bureaucratic structure of American trade unions is the huge number (about 60,000) of paid functionaries. Figures compiled by Seymour M. Lipset of the University of California (Berkeley) show that while in the capitalist countries of Europe (for example, Norway, Britain and Sweden) there is one paid union worker for every 1,700 to 2,200 union members, in the United States the ratio is 1 : 300. [133•3 It should be emphasised that the growth in the number of high-ranking 134 paid officials is coupled with a reduction in the number of shop stewards in many large industries. For example, while there used to be an average of one shop steward for every 25 workers in industry, the figure now is one for every 1.200. [134•1 The labour bureaucracy, however, is by no means homogeneous.

Functionaries in the locals and in on-the-job organisations are close to the masses and feel constant pressure from them. At the apex of the labour bureaucracy, however, are people who in their life style, income and ideology are far removed from those whose interests they are supposed to defend. Many top labour leaders, although they operate within the working class, in fact side with the bourgeoisie. Salaries of top-ranking labour leaders range between $50,000 and $100,000 a year. The magazine *US News & World Report* gave the following examples of annual income in 1964: president of the National Maritime Union Joseph Curran—$105,823; president of the United Steelworkers of America David McDonald—$74,973; president of the International Union of Operating Engineers Hunter P. Wharton—$74,099; president of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks George Harrison—$63,522. [134•2

p AFL-CIO president George Meany, who until 1965 had a salary of $45,000 a year (not counting a several thousand dollar expense account), was granted a substantial salary increase by a decision of the AFL-CIO's Sixth Convention. In 1968, this labour boss got $72,471. [134•3 The annual salary of the new president of the teamsters' union in 1971 was set at $125,000. [134•4 Somewhat lower are the salaries of lesser union officials. For example, Anthony Provenzano, president of Teamsters Local 560 had an income of over $63,000 in 1963. [134•5 On the average, the annual salaries of union officials in this category range from $15,000 to $30,000. [134•6

p Receiving disproportionately (compared with union members) high salaries, many labour leaders, writes University of Chicago Professor Albert Rees, though they stem from the working class, in time take on "middle class" views and manners. "They come to feel that they should be paid like others who do work of similar difficulty and importance." [135•1 Indeed, having turned union treasuries into a source of their personal enrichment, some union bureaucrats unabashedly complain that their salaries are "too small", merely falling "within the range of the second or third ranking officials of a middle-sized corporation". [135•2

p In his book, *The Crisis of American Labor*, Sidney Lens, author of a number of works on the US labour movement, explains the reasons for the widening gap between union rank-and-file and those of their leaders who have betrayed their class. Writes Lens: "Eventually the union leader draws so far from his members that he adopts the ethics of business; he still serves his workers, still wins wage increases and reductions in hours, but the union becomes for him a vehicle for personal enrichment as well. . .. The rank–andfile member now loses not only his right to oppose but his right to dissent as well, and the union is no longer ruled by its members but by the machine. The area of decision narrows. The broad decisions are no longer made by the local union members, but by their leaders. Eventually they are no longer made by the local union officials either, but by the national leaders. The base of the labour pyramid loses its important prerogatives, confining itself more and more to secondary problems, while an entrenched bureaucracy at the top is predominant." [135•3

p Rightist labour leaders, tied ideologically and politically with the bourgeoisie and the whole system of state– monopoly capitalism, are a "millstone around the neck of the working class"; as far as they are able they impede the development of the class struggle and betray the fundamental interests of the working people. Violating basic principles of trade union democracy and supplanting them with a policy of dictation and pressure from above, Rightist AFLCIO leaders try to cultivate within unions certain attitudes that are alien to these class organisations of the proletariat. It is primarily the labour bosses who are to blame for the fact that the ranks of the working class are still split; that in many unions recruitment of new members has been sorely neglected, chauvinism and discrimination against blacks and other minorities are practised, progressive and militant elements are persecuted, corruption and strikebreaking have not been eliminated and the principles of worker solidarity and proletarian internationalism are all but forgotten. Stirred to active protest by the patently anti-labour policy pursued by Rightist labour leaders are not only many rankand-file union members, but also some high-ranking union officials. Albert F. Hartung, for example, retiring president of the AFL-CIO International Woodworkers of America, expressing his dissatisfaction with the collaborationist activity of the AFL-CIO leadership, told the 25th Convention of his union that "top leaders of the AFL-CIO are so far removed from the rank-and-file workers' problems that they know nothing about their needs. They are more at home with the 'striped-pants diplomats' and 'high society' than they are with the workers. Some of the leaders have spent more time supporting the CIA than they have on the workers' problems." [136•1

p The close ties between conservative AFL-CIO leaders and the ruling circles—and, in particular, the support they give to the Department of State and the CIA in their pursuit of an imperialist foreign policy objectives—have received notoriety both within the United States and abroad. American writers have published a number of works in recent years citing convincing evidence that the more reactionary 137 segment of the trade union bureaucracy has long become an appendage of the huge anti-communist machinery of US imperialism. [137•1 "From World War I to the present era of Cold War," wrote American historian Ronald Radosh, "the leaders of organised labour have willingly offered their support to incumbent administrations, and have aided the Department of State in its pursuit of foreign policy objectives." [137•2 Rightist labour leaders became especially active along these lines immediately after the Second World War. Frightened by the growing successes and prestige of the socialist countries and by the renewed vigour of the workingclass struggle in the United States, the trade union bureaucracy of the American Federation of Labour and the Rightist leaders of the Congress of Industrial Organisations promptly joined the cold war.

p Using the slogan of anti-communism as a cover for its subversive activities in a number of countries throughout the world, the reactionary union bureaucracy headed by George Meany and his chief foreign policy adviser, Jay Lovestone, [137•3 used every means possible to hamper the struggle of the international working class, to undermine its unity and to impede the activity of progressive labour organisations. With AFL-CIO funds, as well as with financial assistance coming from the CIA, the State Department and the

monopolies, the Meany-Lovestone group through its emissaries, such as Irving Brown in Europe and Serafino Romualdi in Latin America, worked hard to persuade and 138 bribe trade union officials, split the trade union movement and win the support of national trade union centres and international trade union organisations for the policy of the US ruling circles.

p The Meany-Lovestone group has pursued, and continues to pursue, its subversive activity in the trade unions in developing countries through the militantly anti-communist Inter-American Organisation of Labour, as well as through such organisations under AFL-CIO jurisdiction as the American Institute for Free Labour Development, the African-American Labour Centre and the Asian-American Free Labour Institute. Through their ramified machinery, the reactionary leaders of the AFL-CIO for many years supported Batista's corrupt regime in Cuba and waged struggles in the interests of US monopoly capital against progressive and democratic forces in British Guiana, Guatemala, Brazil and the Dominican Republic. On the whole, however, the successes of the Meany-Lovestone group's postwar foreign policy have been highly questionable; despite all its efforts, its claims to leadership in the international workers' movement are far from being realised.

p The reactionary policy pursued by Meany & Co. to the benefit of the monopoly bourgeoisie, the close co-operation of the trade union bureaucracy with management and government agencies, as well as expansionism abroad, have all been subjected to strident criticism by the trade union masses in recent years.

p Developments in the US labour movement clearly indicate that dissatisfaction with the conciliatory actions of labour leaders is mounting. General Secretary of the Communist Party of the USA, Gus Hall, spoke of the reasons for this discontent in his report to the Party's 18th National Convention: "The critical eye which the rank-and-file are turning toward the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO becomes more sharply critical as the problems of job security, speedup, high taxes and high prices become more acute. They are beginning to press a number of questions:

p "When was the last time the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO gave consideration and leadership to any labour struggle?

p "When was the last time it used its powers and influence 139 to mobilise support for an economic struggle? In the New York transit strike it played its usual role of trying to get the struggle called off.

p "What, concretely, has the Executive Council done about the continuing bars against Negro workers in the affiliated unions? What has it done about breaking the imprisonment of Negro workers in the lowest job classifications and grades?

p "What has been the Executive Council's leadership on questions of automation?

p “These are legitimate questions. They show that the distance between the Executive Council and the struggle of the workers is as great as it can be.” [139•1

p A significant progressive trend illustrating the growth of rank-and-file activity has been the development of a mass movement of union members, the development of open and organised opposition to the conciliatory policies of the trade union bureaucracy and worker efforts to rectify the situation in their unions. Coming out in defence of their own vital interests and rights, workers at the same time demand that their leaders take action on urgent problems facing the labour movement.

p It would be difficult to find an example in the history of the American labour movement over the last 25 to 30 years of an influential union president’s meeting any serious opposition within his union. Until recently, as *Time* magazine put it, it was as impossible for union members to remove a union boss as for a basketball player to get rid of the referee. Reformist leaders of American unions held so much power and had officially canonised such a dictatorial machine as to virtually exclude the possibility of their removal for doing a bad job or losing an election. For decades, any organised rank-and-file opposition to a given union’s top officials was categorised by the latter as splitting activity jeopardising the very existence of the union. However, along about mid-year in 1964 some substantial changes took place in quite a few unions, where many fairly prominent union officials lost their jobs.

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p In the steelworkers’ union, David McDonald, who was the union’s president for 12 years, lost an election to I. W. Abel, the union’s former secretary-treasurer. In the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, James Carey was defeated by Paul Jennings, a member of the union’s executive committee. In the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, where for over 30 years no one had dared to challenge the presidency of Arnold Zander, *a* new man, Jerry Wurf, stepped into the office. New leaders were elected in a number of other unions.

p The positions of long-entrenched trade union bosses were beginning to crumble. "For rarely in modern times,” wrote *Washington Post*, "has the leadership of the big international unions been so embattled as it is today. And the threat comes from within—from its own membership—rather than from without.” [140•1

p Of course, the reasons for ousting old leaders are specific to each individual case. But, on the whole, they reflect the general growing dissatisfaction felt by the great bulk of union members concerning the condition of the trade union movement.

p The end of 1964 and the beginning of 1965 saw an especially hot battle for power in the nation’s third largest union, the United Steelworkers of America. It all looked very much like a caricature of a national presidential campaign. Both candidates, McDonald and Abel, travelled extensively trying to visit as many as possible of the union’s locals in 46 states and also in Canada and Puerto Rico. They each had a staff of experts to write

speeches, arrange radio and television appearances and send out "personal letters" to the rank-and-file. Wide use was made of buttons and hats carrying slogans such as "All the Way with David J." or "I'm for I. W. Abel". McDonald never missed a chance to kiss steelworkers' babies and to shake as many hands as he could at factory gates. Nor did the campaign proceed without abusive language. At one point, for example, in a heated debate McDonald called Abel a "damn liar". As *The New York Times* commented, it was "one of the 141 biggest and most intense [election campaigns] in the history of the labour movement." [141•1

p The fight centred mainly around the activity of the Human Relations Committee, the organ for settling disputes between the eleven major steel companies, on the one hand, and the union, on the other. The conciliatory policy pursued by the union leaders and the fact that, because of the Human Relations Committee, representatives of the union's locals were given no part in working out the terms of collective agreements, evoked widespread dissatisfaction among the union's lesser officials. "There had been," wrote *The New York Times*, "a growing feeling in the middle echelon of the union—district directors and local union leaders—that McDonald had become too authoritarian and arrogant, disregarding the opinions and problems of district leaders and rank-and-filers. In addition, they have charged, he had become more fond of his associations with company executives and Government officials than with union colleagues." [141•2 Demands to put an end to the leadership's dictatorship and to establish closer contact with rank-and-file union members became increasingly insistent at union meetings. Workers everywhere were urging action to win higher wages, better working conditions and real guarantees against layoffs, and were demanding the right to carry out strikes in defence of their local demands. Opposition to McDonald's policy grew as the time for negotiating a new agreement with the steel companies approached. And it was under these circumstances that Abel, criticising "tuxedo trade unionism" (referring to McDonald's fondness of mingling with the upper crust) and promising to "give the union back to the members" and "to get back on the track of solid trade unionism", scored his victory.

p It is noteworthy that *The New York Times*, explaining the reasons for the struggle within the steelworkers' union, wrote: "Ironically, the mutual trusteeship idea and the Human Relations Committee, which were hailed in some circles as major advances in labour relations, were at least partly 142 responsible for the present struggle." [142•1 Immediately alter the election, many observers noted that the Human Relations Committee had lost its former significance, had compromised itself and no longer played any noticeable role in the 1965 negotiations between the steel companies and the union.

p No less intense was the election battle that raged for several months in the 290,000-member United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers Union. At a stormy convention in September 1964, the forces opposing the re-election of president James B. Carey nominated their own candidate, secretary of the union's New York-New Jersey area Paul Jennings. The election that took place a month later, however, ended in Jennings' defeat: Carey claimed a victory by a majority of 2,193 votes. But six months later a big scandal broke out; a recount of the votes—made at the insistence of Jennings' supporters—

revealed serious irregularities. It turned out that there were 25,000 counterfeit ballots made out in favour of Carey. [142•2 Thus, the career of James B. Carey, the so-called boy wonder of the American labour movement who spent 36 of his 53 years in top labour union posts, ended ignominiously.

p Major changes took place in the leadership of a number of other unions as well. At a convention of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees held in April 1964, pressure from below forced Arnold Zander, who had been entrenched in the presidency ever since the union was founded (1932), to give up his post to Jerry Wurf. The latter was well known for his many years of union battles with New York's Mayor Wagner and other authorities.

p Former president of the American Federation of Teachers Carl Megel, who had strong backing from AFL-CIO leaders, lost out in that union's election in 1964 to Charles Cogen, who had led a strike of 40,000 teachers in New York. Analysing the results of the election, *Newsweek* magazine called Cogen's victory a "triumph for militancy". [142•3

p A prolonged internal conflict plaguing the Textile Workers Union of America was resolved in the summer of 1964 143 at the l.ith national convention ol that union. After a fierce struggle, Meany-champion Emil Rieve was stripped of his title of President Emeritus, which had enabled him to exert direct influence on union affairs. Many of Rieve's supporters on the Executive Council were also removed.

p Another long and stormy conflict ended in July 1965 when the president of the International Association of Machinists, Albert Hays, who had violated union rules and illegally fired union staff members who did not suit him, was ousted.

p In September 1966, a convention of the United Rubber Workers of America expressed lack of confidence in president George Burden by electing Peter Bommarito. Burdon's opposition charged that he had lost touch with the membership, had become indifferent to their needs and had misused union funds. [143•1

p Highly significant was the forced retirement in the summer of 1968 of James A. Suffridge, who for 24 years running headed the big Retail Clerks International Association. The opposition, with strong support in many locals, opposed Suffridge, Meany's right-hand man and possible successor, with a programme to rebuild and revive the union. That reactionary labour leader and nine of his closest aides were officially accused of spending over $1,000,000 of union funds for purposes unconnected with union needs. [143•2

p An exceptionally sharp struggle for changes in leadership developed in the United Mine Workers union. Back in 1964, UMW president W. A. (Tony) Boyle was opposed by Steve Kochis, who had taken part that year in a "wildcat" strike of young miners protesting a contract that the union leadership had signed with the mine owners. This was the first time in 40 years that an open challenge was made to the bureaucratic UMW leadership, which had assumed almost dictatorial powers. [143•3

p Kochis justly accused the Executive Council of disregarding the interests of the membership, gross violation of trade union democracy, etc. When opposition supporters tried to criticise the leadership at the convention, they were brutally beaten right in the convention hall. [144•1 In December, the results of a referendum were announced: Boyle had received a majority of the votes. Meanwhile, however, reports filtered into the press that there was evidence of ballot box stuffing in favour of the union leadership.

p A struggle to dislodge the UMW leadership broke out again in the second half of 1969. Opposing Boyle and his bureaucratic machine this time was Joseph Yablonski, former director of the union's Western Pennsylvania district. Tens of thousands of rank-and-file UMW members in the Appalachian coal basin formed groups supporting his candidacy. Yablonski accused the leadership of collaboration with mine owners, corruption and embezzlement of union funds, [144•2 and called for a special convention to strengthen democratic procedures in the union, mandatory retirement of officers at the age of 65 and greater militancy in contract bargaining.

p Once again, as in 1964, reprisals were taken against those who dared to openly criticise the union bosses. During the election campaign, Yablonski himself was beaten to unconsciousness by hired thugs. Resorting to various machinations (including the uses of tens of thousands of fraudulent ballots), Boyle and his cohorts got the election results they 145 wanted. But Yablonski did not give up the fight; he challenged the election results and continued to accuse the leadership of corruption.

p On January 5, 1970, courageous labour leader Joseph A. Yablonski, his wife and their daughter were found snot to death in their Clarkesville, Pennsylvania, home. "This coldblooded murder of a militant UMW leader bears the imprint of political reprisal," noted a special statement by the Communist Party of the USA. Comparing Yablonski's murder with the murders of prominent civil rights leaders and the murders of labour leaders in other states in recent years, the Communist Party pointed out that the reactionary forces in the country were using terrorist tactics in their effort to halt the American people's struggle for progress. "Ultimate responsibility for the murder of Joseph A. Yablonski and his wife and daughter is to be found 'in the ranks of the rapacious coal barons'," the statement emphasised. [145•1

p Struggles for changes in leadership have also taken place in recent years in the Insurance Workers International Union, the National Federation of Federal Employees, the National Postal Union, the American Federation of Government Employees, the National Maritime Union, the International Longshoremen's Association, the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, in some of the railroad workers' unions and elsewhere. The movement also spread to AFL-CIO organisations on the state level. This trend was seen, for example, in the AFL-CIO's New York state branch, the split of the New Jersey state branch into two organisations and the tense election struggle between two candidates at a convention of the Massachusetts branch.

p Important changes have also been taking place in recent years at the local level. Election of front-rank workers to union posts has now become standard procedure in many unions, especially when it comes to the election of shop stewards and presidents of locals. As *The New York Times* wrote in September 1970, "There has been more turnover at the local level than has ever been witnessed in the history of the labour movement". [145•2 Indeed, in the United Steel– 146 workers of America, new presidents were elected in 1970 in 1,100 of that union's 3,800 locals. [146•1

p Of course, all the personnel changes that have taken place at the highest level by no means signify that every newly elected official is a representative of his union's rank–andfile. In some cases, as for example in the United Steelworkers of America and the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, today's rivals have for many years proposed the same programmes and pursued the same policy. But noteworthy is the fact that, on the whole, today's opposition has shown a greater understanding of current problems and offers a programme that to a large extent meets the aspirations of the bulk of the union membership. And this is not accidental. The emergence of an opposition in such a short span of time in so many unions stems from the strong discontent observable among workers in recent years.

These events have made a marked impact on the American labour movement as a whole. Rank-and-file workers show greater boldness in criticising the conciliatory policies of their leaders and demand that the unions become an effective weapon of workers against the monopolies. A sign of the growing militancy of the great mass of rank– andfilers are the many instances where workers have rejected agreements signed behind their backs by their leaders and employers. In the words of secretary-treasurer of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union Louis Goldblatt, "the labour movement is getting sick and tired of a group of trade union officials who at their best can be called mediators or emissaries and at their worst a bunch of piecards and sellout artists. There is something pretty phony going on when you read almost any week a report about another agreement brought back by another group of trade union officials that is automatically rejected by the rank-and-file. That is the common news in labour today." [146•2 According to Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service figures, the number of agreements worked out by union officials and employers but rejected by union memberships has been consistently high in recent years.

147 Percentage of Collective Agreements Rejected by Workers, 1964–1970 [147•1
1964 1965 1966 1967 8.7 10.0 11.7 14.2 1968 1969 1970 11.9 12.3 11.2

p "Mediators and those who follow the national labour picture," noted the magazine, *The Nation*, "maintain that if accurate records were kept of all contract rejections, the figure would be close to 15 per cent." [147•2 Such "obstinacy" on the part of the workers, according to W. Taylor, president of one of the locals of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, may be explained by the fact "that recommendations of union officials and negotiating committees don't have the weight they had at one time with the rank-and-file". [147•3

p Concerned over the resolute attitude taken by rank– andfile workers in labour disputes and their increasingly frequent rejection of the conciliatory position of union bosses, the government and the monopolies, as reported in the US press, are seeking new anti-labour legislation to deny workers of their right to ratify contracts. [147•4 Symptomatically, many Rightist labour leaders give their approval and support to the monopolies' plans. George Meany, for example, speaking at a session of the AFL-CIO Executive Council in February 1970, said bluntly that "contracts worked out by labour leaders and management should be final and not subject to the approval of union members". [147•5 As aptly put in a circular, "Nixonised Unions—Threat to the Rank-and-File", put out in early 1971 by the independent labour magazine, *Labor Today*, "there is a word for Meany's position against rank-and-file: Betrayal".

p The activisation and radicalisation of the union masses 148 in recent years have served as a warning to Rightist labour leaders who, contrary to the interests of the working people, use their power to expand the policy of class collaboration. Anticipating the outcome of the election in the steelworkers' union and the influence it would have on other unions, *Washington Post* wrote in November 1964: "If McDonald loses, the lesson will not be wasted on other labour leaders. What profiteth a man to assume the mantle of labour statesman, they will ask, to win the plaudits of Government and economists by negotiating two successive contracts well within the Administration's anti-inflationary wage-price guideposts, to improve the bargaining atmosphere by maintaining year-around talks with management, to keep the industry free of strikes for five years, if in the end he loses his job." [148•1

One of the demands union rank-and-filers have been making recently is for compulsory retirement of union officials at some specified age. These demands are aimed directly against the ruling clique of the AFL-CIO, whose Executive Council includes the presidents of many of the nation's largest unions. In 1970, the average age of the 35 members of this council (the "Vatican Curia" as it is sometimes referred to in the press) was over 63 years, and there were many leaders of influential unions over 70 and 80 years of age. [148•2 The rank-and-file workers would like to dislodge from high union posts people who have long impeded the growth of new forces. Reflecting this attitude was, for example, the batch of 371 resolutions introduced at the 1964 convention of the steelworkers' union calling for a compulsory age limit for officers. A number of unions—- including the International Association of Machinists, the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers, the United Automobile Workers and the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks—have already amended their constitutions, setting 65 as the age limit for top union posts. [148•3

149 The reactionary AFL-CIO clique and the ruling circles in the country, alarmed at the growing movement for greater democracy in the unions, are doing everything they can to maintain the status quo. One argument they use, as frankly reported in *The Christian Science Monitor*, is that "in some instances the less democratic unions provide the more stable labour relations", [149•1 or, in other words, adopt positions that are more acceptable to big business. It was highly significant that in March 1965, immediately after McDonald and Carey were defeated, [149•2 AFL-CIO president George Meany

suggested that the referendum system of electing union officers which is used by a number of unions be changed. He said that ". . .union conventions are the best places to hold elections" since "the referendum system hasn't worked". [149•3 This proposal, which reflected the views of many other members of the AFL-CIO Executive Council, was aimed at preventing a repetition of the "sad experience" of the elections in the steelworkers' and electricians' unions. [149•4

p As the movement of union rank-and-file against their reactionary leaders mounted, voices in Congress calling for stiffer control over union elections grew louder. Discussed in government circles in 1965 was a proposal to give the 150 Department of Labour special powers (in addition to those it already had under the Landrum-Griffin Act) which would enable it to intervene in any union election.

p Reports filtered into the American press in early 1967 that the Central Intelligence Agency continually interfered in the election process of labour unions in an effort to assure victory for candidates connected with that organisation. In February 1967, the *World Journal Tribune* gave an example of how this took place. "Not too many years ago, for example," the paper wrote, "the CIA was directed to thwart... oil workers unions in the Mideast... . The CIA did what comes naturally. It contacted US labour leaders. There was— and is—one small national union which was just the outfit to move into the fight. It did.

p "But during this period its erudite president came up for re-election. He won. It takes money to run union campaigns. ... As a result of the victory of the CIA's friend, reports flared that his campaign was financed by the ' invisible government'." [150•1 Instances of the CIA's supporting labour leaders it deems desirable are far from rare.

p The progressive trend in the labour movement that manifests itself in open opposition to the top union brass has been dubbed "the revolt of the union rank-and-file". The monopoly circles do not conceal their alarm over the events taking place. Expressing their sentiments, *The Christian Science Monitor* wrote: "The most sweeping changes in more than a quarter century are under way in the leadership of American labour. Within several years, they are likely to bring shifts in the structure, policies, and behaviour of unions with millions of members. Shock waves of problems are possible in industrial relations." [150•2

p The Communist Party of the USA has highly assessed the rank-and-file movement against the leadership of the AFL-CIO and many individual unions. A resolution "Labor and Trade Union Problems", adopted at the 18th National Convention of the Communist Party of the USA, noted that the deposition of old reactionary leaders and their 151 replacement by new militant leaders creates important prerequisites for broadening and invigorating the working-class struggle. "Rank-and-file movements produce the fresh leadership necessary to replenish labour's rank," one of the resolutions of the 18th National Convention stressed. "They are a source of strength to militant trade union leaders, and a spur to the do-nothings, who either respond to the demands of the day or are discarded." [151•1

p The growing dissatisfaction felt by union rank-and-file with the policy of class collaboration pursued by union bureaucrats stimulated the consolidation of the more active forces within the working class and gave rise to new forms of struggle at the lower level to revitalise the labour movement. Recent years have seen the formation of committees of one kind or another within a number of unions—in the steelworkers' and miners' unions, for example—for the purpose of exchanging views and working out action programmes to protect worker rights and interests. An event helping to unite these scattered forces was the National Rank-and-File Conference held in Chicago on June 27–28, 1970. Taking part in the conference were 900 delegates, all rank-and-file union members representing primarily Left and Centre forces in unions functioning in various branches of industry in 25 states. A statement issued in connection with the conference read: "We are a movement in the labour movement. We exist to help build, strengthen and unify it; to help defend it from attacks by the Nixon or any anti-labour administration and Big Business; to help democratise the trade unions through the elimination of racism in all forms and by supporting maximum control over the affairs of the unions by the membership.... The rank-and-file is the labour movement. There can be no revitalisation of the trade unions without the maximum involvement of the membership. Organised labour cannot decisively defeat the corporation anti-labour offensive without bringing the full power of its millionfold membership into motion. This is our aim: to move our unions into effective action in defence of the 152 best interests of the entire membership." [152•1

p The Chicago conference unanimously adopted a number of declarations (on labour rights; on the rights of blacks and other minority workers; on combat against racism; for peace and against repression; on the rights of women workers; on the rights of working youth), which comprised an action programme for union rank-and-file. The conference set up a 130-man National Co-ordinating Committee for Trade Union Action and Democracy. In a matter of eight months after the conference, 17 chapters of this committee were set up throughout the country—in California, Illinois, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey and elsewhere. [152•2

The events of 1970 and 1971 were another step forward for the American working-class movement. They clearly demonstrated how wide the gap between the Rightist AFLCIO leadership and the mass of rank-and-filers had become. As auto worker Charles Wilson said at a conference of the New York Committee for Trade Union Action and Democracy, "nothing could be more right, or more timely, than this movement of ours. We are beginning to move. But these are only the beginnings. We have to move wider, deeper and faster... ." [152•3 This growing determination on the part of rank-and-file union members to rid their organisations of the eroding rust of class collaboration provides an important stimulus for a fresh upsurge of the working-class movement and weakens the positions of the labour bureaucracy which impedes the development of the class struggle.

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TEXT SIZE

Notes

[131•1] Ibid., Vol. 25, pp. 486–87.

[132•1] Gus Hall, *For a Meaningful Alternative*, p. 29.

[132•2] *La situation syndicate aux Etats-Unis. Rapport d'une mission du Bureau international du travail*, Geneve, 1960 p. 28.

[132•3] *The Advance*, April 1, 1963.

[133•1] Joseph A. Beirne, *New Horizons for American Labor*, Public Affairs Press, Washington, 1962, pp. 61, 64; *Labor News Conference*, April 29, 1963; *News from the AFL-CIO*, N. A. 8-3870, p. 6.

[133•2] *US News & World Report*, September 7, 1970, p. 59.

[133•3] Seymour M. Lipset, "Trade Unions and Social Structure", *Industrial Relations*, February 1962, p. 93.

[134•1] *World Marxist Review*, lune 1970, p. 39.

[134•2] *US News & World Report*, May 17, 1965, p. 88.

[134•3] Ibid., January 19, 1970, p. 55.

[134•4] *Business Week*, luly 10, 1971, p. 68.

[134•5] *The Worker*, February 26, 1963.

[134•6] The extent to which the "earnings" of top labour leaders grew between 1944 and 1964 can be seen by comparing the figures given above with figures published in Florence Peterson's book, *American Labor Unions* (1945). In 1944 90 per cent of the presidents of unions with less than 100,000 members received yearly salaries ol $7,500 or less. Only two presidents in this category got as much as $20,000 a year. The salaries of 50 per cent of the presidents of unions with more than 100,000 members ranged from $5,000 to $10,000 a year. Only nine in this category received salaries of from $12,000 to $15,000 and five received $20,000 to $30,000 a year. The AFL president's annual salary was $20,000 (Florence Peterson, *American Labor Unions. What They Are and How They Work*, Harper and Brothers Publishers, New York, 1945, pp. 115–16).

[135•1] Albert Rees, *The Economics of Trade Unions*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, 1962, p. 176.

[135•2] Joseph A. Beirne, *New Horizons for American Labor*, p. 76.

[135•3] Sidney Lens, *The Crisis of American. Labor*, New York, 1959, p. 49.

[136•1] *The Worker*, February 25, 1968.

[137•1] George Morris, *CIA and American Labor. The Subversion of the AFL-CIO's Foreign Policy*, International Publishers, New York, 1967; Ronald Radosh, *American Labor and United States Foreign Policy. The Cold War in the Unions from Gompers to Lovestone*, New York, Random House, 1969; Sidney Lens, *The Military-Industrial Complex*, Philadelphia, Pilgrim Press, 1970.

[137•2] Ronald Radosh, *American Labor and United States Foreign Policy*, p. 4.

[137•3] Jay Lovestone, the head of the International Affairs Department of the AFL-CIO, has been pursuing intense anti-communist activity for more than 40 years. A renegade from the communist movement, expelled in 1929 from the Communist Party of the USA for reformism and betraying the interests of the party and the working class, Lovestone quickly went to work for the Rightist trade union bureaucracy. This "Allen Dulles of the American labour movement" or "CIA man in the AFL-CIO", as he is sometimes dubbed in the press, has for many years acted as liaison between George Meany's clique and the CIA.

[139•1] Gus Hall, *For a Radical Change—ihc Communist View*, New York, 19(i(i, p. 31.

[140•1] *Washington Post*, November 27, 1964.

[141•1] *The New York Times*, February 7, 1965.

[141•2] Ibid.

[142•1] *The New York Times*, February 7, 1965.

[142•2] *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 8, 1965.

[142•3] *Newsweek*, August 31, 1964, p. 53.

[143•1] *The Worker*, October 2, 1966.

[143•2] *Monthly Labor Review*, October 1968, p. 71; *The Worker*, July 14, 1968.

[143•3] Written into the UMW constitution are provisions for various harsh punitive measures, all the way to expulsion from union membership, that may be taken against any member who criticises the leadership. For example, Article XX (Sec. 3) reads: "Any member guilty of slandering or circulating, or causing to be circulated, false statements about any member or any members circulating or causing to be circulated any statement wrongfully condemning any decision rendered by any officer of the Organisation, shall,

upon conviction, be suspended from membership for a period of six months and shall not be eligible to hold office in any branch of the Organisation for two years thereafter. The above shall be construed as applying to any local officer or member reading such circulars to the members of a Local Union, or who in any way gives publicity to such." (*Constitution of the International Union. United Mine Workers of America*, Adopted at Bal Harbour, Florida, September 9, 1964, pp. 78–79.)

[144•1] *The New Republic*, February 27, 1965, pp. 9-10.

[144•2] President Boyle, two other top union officers and nine of their closest relatives got about $400,000 from the union treasury in the course of a year. It is noteworthy that the Deparment of Labour, always ready to interfere in the internal affairs of trade unions, declined Yablonski's request for an investigation of these financial abuses.

[145•1] *Daily World*, January 10, 1970.

[145•2] *The New York Times*, September 6, 1970.

[146•1] *US News & World Report*, August 31, 1970, p. 50.

[146•2] *The Dispatcher*, August 18, 1967.

[147•1] *The Nation*, June 21, 1971, p. 782.

[147•2] Ibid.

[147•3] *'The Worker*, December 11, 1966.

[147•4] *The Los Angeles Times*, February 3, 1971; *The Nation*, June 21, 1971, pp. 784–85.

[147•5] *Proceedings. Twenty-Second Constitutional Convention. International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)*, April 20–24, 1970, p. 20.

[148•1] *Washington Post*, November 27, 1964.

[148•2] *Time*, November 9, 1970, p. 62.

[148•3] *Directory of National and International Labor Unions in the United States, 1965*. Bulletin No. 1493, p. 42; *Proceedings. 19th Constitutional Convention. International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)*, March 20–27, 1964, pp. 410–13; *AFL-CIO News*, June 5, 1971.

[149•1] *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 15, 1965.

[149•2] It may be of interest to note that after McDonald and Carey were voted out of office by their unions' rank-and-file, the AFL-CIO leadership showered them with exceptional concern and attention. The AFLCIO Executive Council, for example, gave McDonald the Murray-Green Award. At the award-giving ceremonies on May 21, 1965, Secretary of Labour Willard Wirtz called McDonald a "great soldier", and Meany said that the award was conferred on McDonald "because he put the interests of his union first" (*The New York Times*, May 22, 1965). As concerns Carey, he was soon offered a high-paying job as director of labour participation in the United Nations Association (*The Worker*, March 13, 1966).

[149•3] *Business Week*, March 13, 1965.

[149•4] Of the 70 major US unions with a total of about 16 million members, only 16 use the referendum system for electing their officers, while the remainder, with a total membership of about 11 million, conduct their elections at conventions. As a rule, convention delegates are officers themselves (Leo Bromwich, *Union Constitutions. A Report to the Fund for the Republic*, New York, 1959, p. 24).

[150•1] *World Journal Tribune*, February 18, 1967.

[150•2] *The Christian Science Monitor*, June 3, 1965.

[151•1] "Unite for Peace, Negro Freedom, Labor's Advance, Socialism", *Resolutions of the 18th National Convention of the Communist I'arty, USA*, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1967, p. 26.

[152•1] "Trade Union Action and Democracy". Issued by the National Co-ordinating Committee for Trade Union Action and Democracy, Chicago, Illinois, 1970.

[152•2] *Daily World*, March 27, 1971.

[152•3] *Call to Struggle. Report Back from the Conference of the New York Committee for Trade Union Action and Democracy, Held November 14–15, 1970*, p. 15.

TRENDS TOWARD THE RADICALISATION OF LABOUR'S STRUGGLE

p Growing opposition to the AFL-CIO top leadership's policies aimed at thwarting the labour movement has come 153 not only from the rank-and-file and lower echelon leaders, but even from some high-ranking labour leaders. In 1966 and 1967, George Meany and the group of conservative labour leaders supporting him became the targets of strong criticism from the leadership of the UAW, headed by Walter Reuther. The reason for the conflict was Reuther's strenuous objection to the AFL-CIO leaders' actions in matters of foreign and domestic policy.

p In the summer of 1966, Reuther condemned Meany for ordering a boycott of a meeting of the International Labour Organisation in Geneva on the grounds that a representative of Poland was to chair the conference. The conflict was subsequently aggravated because of Meany's stance regarding relationships with trade unions in socialist countries. And in August 1966, when the AFL-CIO Executive Council announced its wholehearted support of the Johnson Administration's aggressive policy in Vietnam, Reuther called that decision "intemperate, hysterical, jingoistic, and unworthy of the statement of a free labour movement". [153•1

p At the beginning of 1967, Reuther announced his resignation from his position as vice-president and member of the AFL-CIO Executive Council and sent a letter to all UAW locals explaining his reasons.

p The letter, signed by Reuther and his deputies, Emil Mazey, Leonard Woodcock and Pat Greathouse, who had also withdrawn from the AFL-CIO hierarchy, sharply criticised the activity of the AFL-CIO top brass, stressing that the issues involved "extend far beyond considerations of international affairs and go to the heart of the fulfilment of the fundamental aims and purposes of the American labour movement". The letter noted that "AFL-CIO—as the parent body of the American labour movement—suffers from a sense of complacency and adherence to the status quo and is not fulfilling the basic aims and purposes which prompted the merger of the AFL and the CIO". [153•2

p The AFL-CIO Executive Council was criticised for failing to undertake efforts to draw millions of unorganised 154 workers into trade unions, for its lack of a national wages policy and for its unwillingness to tackle problems stemming from automation. It was also reproached for insufficient participation in the civil rights struggle and the struggle for equal rights for black workers within the labour movement itself, for its unwillingness to launch an effective struggle against poverty and in defence of economic and social justice for millions of impoverished American citizens and mercilessly exploited agricultural and migrant workers. And, finally, the Executive Council was charged with violation of democratic principles and the AFL-CIO constitution.

p In April 1967, the actions taken by the UAW leaders received the overwhelming approval and support of representatives of the union's locals at a special convention

called to work out the terms of a new contract soon to be up for negotiation. In December 1967, underscoring its rupture with the Meany group, the UAW refused to send a delegation to the 7th Constitutional Convention of the AFL-CIO.

p The emergence of sharp contradictions between the UAW and the AFL-CIO leadership was not something accidental. The conflict clearly showed that under the pressure of circumstances, even some top labour leaders who had formerly been distinguished for the inconsistency of their positions, had now soberly assessed the sentiments of their membership, were calling for a re-examination of the AFL-CIO's bankrupt course, and were moving in a direction that was largely consonant with the interests of the working class. The Meany group, meanwhile, found itself increasingly isolated both at home and abroad, and many conservative leaders' positions in the labour movement were being challenged. As noted at the 18th National Convention of the Communist Party of the USA, "in some instances, established leaders are adapting to the new situation in the labour movement. In others, fresh leaders are replacing those who fail to react." [154•1

p Speaking at a meeting of the National Committee of the Communist Party of the USA on June 10, 1967, the Party's General Secretary, Gus Hall, underscored the trend toward 155 a polarisation of forces in the labour movement. "The UAW leadership," he noted, "recognises that it is impossible to continue along the groveling Meany-Lovestone-Dubinsky path in the face of the developing labour-capital confrontation. The UAW leaders do not explicitly say so—and most likely are not fully conscious of it—but they reflect the fact that the war orientation has exposed the bankruptcy of a trade union policy tied to the politics of big business." [155•1 This was a very important opening, Hall stressed, for all who want to take part in the revitalisation of the labour movement.

p The events of 1967 showed that the initiative of the UAW opened up possibilities for consolidating the forces opposed to the reactionary domestic and foreign policies of the AFLCIO leadership.

p The conflict between the AFL-CIO leadership and the UAW reached a critical stage in early 1968. In March of that year, Reuther and his deputies sent a letter to George Meany calling for the convocation of a special AFL-CIO convention to make a thorough re-examination of that organisation's action programme with the aim of revitalising the stagnating labour movement. Two months later, a UAW convention in Atlantic City approved the action taken by the UAW leaders and passed a resolution to suspend payment of its membership dues to the AFL-CIO ($96,500 a month) until such time as the Executive Council agreed to call a special convention. In response to that resolution, George Meany announced on May 16, 1968 that the UAW was expelled from the AFL-CIO, thus making the split official. [155•2

p Shortly thereafter, in late July 1968, at the initiative of the UAW (1,600,000, members) and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers, the nation's largest non-AFL-CIO union (about 2,000,000 members), a new organisation was formed—the Alliance for Labour Action (ALA). An official statement on behalf of the new organisation, signed by Walter Reuther and vice-president of the International

Brotherhood of 156 Teamsters Frank Fitzsimmons, noted that the ALA's efforts would be directed toward reviving the militant traditions of the American labour movement in order to satisfy those urgent demands of the US working class that were consistently ignored by the AFL-CIO leadership. [156•1

p The ALA outlined a number of important objectives, such as drawing millions of unorganised American working people into unions and organising the jobless and the poor into community unions; strengthening labour's collective bargaining positions and, in particular, achieving "maximum co-operation, co-ordination and mutual assistance" among unions negotiating jointly with monopoly conglomerates. The new alliance also planned to set up a "special fund" large enough to give financial aid to workers during strikes; to work toward a more active involvement of labour in the civil rights struggle; to press for improvements in social legislation; etc. The ALA leaders announced that the organisation would pursue a policy and implement programmes that would enable the labour movement "to repair the alienation of the liberal-intellectual and academic community and the youth of our nation in order to build a new alliance of progressive forces". [156•2

p Fearing the growth and consolidation of the ALA and its development into an independent labour centre, Meany and his associates took prompt preventative action. The AFLCIO Executive Council warned all AFL-CIO affiliates that any contact with the Alliance for Labour Action would entail expulsion from the AFL-CIO. [156•3 But despite the threat, several AFL-CIO unions, including the International Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union and the United Rubber Workers of America, came out in support of the new organisation. The progressive and independent United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America and International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union of the West Coast also welcomed the formation of the ALA.

p The founding conference of the Alliance for Labour Action was held in Washington on May 27 and 28, 1969. 157 Five hundred delegates from the country's two largest unions—the United Auto Workers and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers approved the statement of goals and principles of the ALA and adopted its constitution. In accordance with Article 1 of its constitution, the ALA is open to any union wishing to participate in joint action to achieve the goals of the organisation. [157•1

p In addition to adopting the constitution, the conference also adopted a number of resolutions on questions of vital interest to American working people (on uniting unorganised workers into unions, on tax reform, on improvements in the system of medical services, on resolving the housing crisis, etc.). The basic aim of all these resolutions was to create a uniform programme for the struggle of rank– andfile union members against the monopolies' attack on their interests and rights.

p The conference also devoted considerable attention to the government's foreign and military policies. As reported in the progressive press, never before in the history of the American labour movement since the Second World War had such a large segment of

organised labour spoken out so strongly against the foreign and military policies of the government. The delegates emphatically condemned the Vietnam war, militarism and the arms race and called for cutbacks in the military budget, urging the government to divert the billions of dollars being spent for military purposes to education, social welfare, housing, etc.

p Shortly after the ALA conference, the 110,000-member International Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union announced its decision to join the new organisation. The Rightist leaders of the AFL-CIO responded to this by pressuring delegates to the Eighth National Convention of the AFL-CIO, held in October 1969, into approving the expulsion of the chemical workers' union from the AFL-CIO. This move, the American press noted, only aggravated the crisis in the AFL-CIO. An indication of the ALA's growing prestige was seen in April 1970, when another union—the 158 50,000-member National Council of Distributive Workers of America—joined the new organisation.

p American Communists and representatives of other progressive trends welcomed the formation of the ALA. The emergence of the ALA, whose stated objective was to bring the labour movement out of stagnation, clearly reflected the major shifts taking place in American trade unions, and was, as Gus Hall described it at the Moscow Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in June 1969, "a direct challenge to the infamous, reactionary Meany-Lovestone AFL-CIO leadership". [158•1

p With all its positive aspects, however, the ALA showed some very serious weaknesses from the very beginning. These include, above all, weak communication with the great mass of rank-and-fders in the labour movement and also the existence in its documents of a number of statements and cliches indicating that the leadership of this organisation has not yet divested itself of anti-communism. In organising the ALA, wrote the *Daily World* "the initiative came from the top, but everybody knows that the underlying force for that initiative was widespread dissatisfaction in the ranks of labour over the lack of leadership and the policy of stagnation in recent struggles. Many of them were spontaneous, but they showed a militancy that can be channeled for a wide and vigorous new upsurge of labour". [158•2 Therefore, noted the Communists, success of the ALA's generally interesting and promising programmes for revitalising the American labour movement depended on whether the ALA leaders were able and willing to support and organise this upsurge of militancy in the labour movement and establish close and effective contacts with the mass movement of rank-and-file workers and with the progressive trends in the unions.

p In 1970 and 1971, after the death in an air accident of UAW president and initiator of the ALA Walter Reuther and the return to the ranks of the AFL-CIO of the International Chemical Workers Union, the capitalist press began predicting the early disintegration of the ALA and the 159 return of the unions affiliated with it back into the AFLCIO. [159•1 At a meeting of its Executive Committee in March 1971, the ALA leaders officially refuted such speculations, stating that the ALA was "a lively, viable organisation, and can have an important role in labour and social affairs for a long time to come". The Executive Committee adopted a resolution to set aside $500,000 for social-

action grants to such organisations as the Leadership Conference for Civil Rights and the National Student Association and mapped out plans for a voter registration campaign among 18– year olds and also a campaign to step up efforts begun earlier to draw unorganised workers into unions. This "positive action", said Leonard Woodcock, Walter Reuther's successor in the UAW, should demonstrate the ALA's " intention ... to help find answers to the most urgent problems facing the labour movement today". [159•2

p However, despite the efforts of the UAW leadership to preserve the ALA, by mid-1971 that organisation had essentially ceased its activities. The top bureaucrats of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters who had grouped around Fitzsimmons gave full support to the Nixon Administration's policy on wage freezing, thereby openly repudiating principles that had been enunciated when the ALA was founded.

p The events of 1967 to 1969—the fission in the AFL-CIO —had a serious effect on relations between the upper echelon of the American labour bureaucracy and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. These relations had been worsening in recent years because of growing opposition to the AFL-CIO leadership's attempts to convert the international labour organisation into an instrument of US imperialist policy. The AFL-CIO Executive Council, fearing that a dangerous precedent might be set if the UAW's request for admission to the ICFTU were approved, announced in late February 1969 its own withdrawal from the Confederation. The reasons given were that the ICFTU had departed from its "initial" anti-communist positions, sought a "rapprochement" with the Confederation Generale du Travail (General Confederation of Labour), and allegedly 160 interfered in the affairs of American trade unions. [160•1 Meany's decision to pull the AFL-CIO out of the ICFTU, said president of the Confederation Generale du Travail Benoit Frachon, is not only an admission of his own failure, the failure of his policy of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism, but also a sign of the failure of the capitalist system as a whole—a manifestation of one of those crises that plague and undermine it from within. This also applies, Mr. Frachon said, to the biggest capitalist country, which only recently bragged that it was guaranteed against such troubles. [160•2

p Finding themselves isolated in the international arena and realising that their policy of threats and pressure was not producing the desired effect, Meany & Co. began behindthe-scenes negotiations on the possible return of the AFLCIO to the ICFTU. The Rightist American labour leaders sought—as their terms for re-entry (and consequently, the payment of over $360,000 a year in dues to ICFTU treasury)—guarantees that the Confederation would pursue a stiff anti-communist policy.

p After the disgraceful failure of their crude attempts at blackmail to usurp the leadership of the ICFTU, the Meany group launched a new campaign, this time against the International Labour Organisation. In the summer of 1970, after the appointment of a representative of the USSR as an assistant to the director general of that international organisation, the AFL-CIO president accused the ILO of steady departure from its original goals and soon thereafter succeeded in getting the US Congress to stop the payment of membership dues to the ILO. Commenting on this congressional action, the US press noted that it was taken in return for the services rendered by Meany & Co. in

supporting the government's aggressive foreign policy increasingly unpopular in the country.

p An important and urgent problem facing the American working class was, and continues to be, the problem of unity in the labour movement. The merger of the AFL and the CIO in 1955, although it was a progressive step opening 161 up real prospects for labour unity, did not produce the results hopefully anticipated. The widely advertised plans and programmes devised by the AFL-CIO Executive Council, in which lip service was paid to the need for including all labour unions in the new federation, were not backed up by any consistent effort to implement them. In fact, the reactionary top leadership of the AFL-CIO headed by Meany did everything it could to isolate a number of prominent unions and to keep them out of the country's main labour organisation. This discriminatory policy was directed above all against progressive unions that had been expelled from the CIO during the cold war on charges of "communist domination". [161•1 Also discriminated against was the nation's largest union, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers, which in terms of its economic achievements and membership growth stood in the first ranks of the American labour movement. [161•2

p The effects of this policy are evident. Although quite a few years have passed since the AFL-CIO merger, the American labour movement is still to a large extent disunited. Figures for 1968, for example, show that of the 189 national and international unions then active (with a total of 18,774,000 members), 126 (with a total of 14,369,000 members) were AFL-CIO affiliates. The remaining 63 162 unions, with a total of 4,405,000 members, were independent. In addition, there were over 1,000 independent local labour organisations (475,000 members) unconnected with AFL-CIO or other unions. [162•1

p The experience accumulated by the labour movement since the merger of the AFL and CIO has shown conclusively that the struggle for unity can be successful only when it is connected with struggle to strengthen the class character of the labour movement, and that there can be no unity based on accommodation to the policy of class collaboration pursued by Meany & Co. The senselessness and futility of this kind of unity were demonstrated by the events of 1967 to 1969, which culminated in the split of the AFL-CIO and the formation of the Alliance for Labour Action.

p The 19th National Convention of the Communist Party of the USA, held in the spring of 1969, laid stress on the need for conducting a more resolute struggle for labour unity. In his report to the Convention, Gus Hall said: "The negative consequences of the merger of the AFL and CIO are not an argument against trade union unity. Rather, they provide lessons on how such a struggle must be conducted. Because of the encrusted character of the top AFLCIO Councils, the trade unions need to find other forms, other centres for co-ordinating struggle, and the organisation of the unorganised." [162•2

p The American working class's determination to strengthen unity in its ranks has shown itself in recent mergers of parallel or related unions. This trend is growing despite the

resistance of the reactionary leaders of the AFL-ClO and a number of individual unions who do not want to see any changes in the status quo.

p Of great note were the mergers, one in 1966 and one in 1967, of two independent progressive unions, each of which had been expelled from the CIO, with large unions 163 close to them in worker profile. In December 1966, the independent and progressive American Communications Association joined the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, and in July 1967, the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers joined the United Steelworkers of America. These notable events showed that the long struggle by reactionary labour leaders to isolate and eliminate militant progressive unions had failed. By uniting with a larger union, yet preserving their own positions (the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers' Union became an autonomous local of the large United Steelworkers of America), the progressive unions had a chance to form an effective labour coalition during contract negotiations.

p As a result of the unification of the progressive International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers and the United Steelworkers of America, 80 per cent of the workers in non-ferrous metallurgy now belonged to the same organisation. During the negotiations preceding the merger it was noted that the achievement of unity could be the " beginning of a fresh historic chapter" in the struggle of the workers of the metallurgical industry; it would "help create a new atmosphere and a fresh spirit in the labour movement of America". [163•1 Shortly after the merger, a strike (that was to last for nine months) broke out in the copper industry (workers in the copper-smelting industry formerly belonged to the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers). That strike demonstrated the power of unity and the inexhaustible possibilities of working-class solidarity. With the active support of workers in the steel industry as well as of 25 other trade unions, the strikers were able to break down the resistance of the monopolies and force the employers to make substantial concessions.

p In the second half of the 1960s, there were a number of other mergers. The American Federation of Hosiery Workers merged with the Textile Workers Union of America; four railroad workers' unions united into a single union (with a total of 250,000 members); two unions in the paper industry merged; and merging with the American 164 Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees were a number of parallel unions. The largest was the merger in the summer of 1968 of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America with the United Packinghouse Workers, to form the fifth largest union in the United States, with over half a million members.

p The drive for labour unity was also reflected in joint efforts by different unions in specific industries during contract negotiations. An outstanding example of this kind of effective co-ordination was the successful struggle waged in late 1969 and early 1970 by the workers of the electrical industry against General Electric, the fourth largest American corporation. This victory was of fundamental importance to labour, for it dealt a crushing blow to the tactics of union splitting and strike suppression, known as "Boulwarism" (after Lemuel R. Boulware, a former GE vice-president), which General Electric had used for over two decades.

p Boulwarism emerged in 1947, at a time when an unprecedented wave of strikes after the Second World War was causing serious alarm in the US ruling circles. Monopoly capital and the government not only set themselves the task of stemming the swelling tide of working-class struggle, but of launching a counter-offensive to force labour to retreat from positions it had already won. A leading role in the monopolies' struggle against organised labour, and above all, against the progressive United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, was taken by General Electric. [164•1 In 1947, Lemuel Boulware, acting on company instructions, formulated a new doctrine for the war against the trade unions. The crux of Boulwarism was the corporation's flat refusal to enter into any kind of collective bargaining with the unions; Boulware and his colleagues called such negotiations "eastern bazaar haggling". Instead of negotiations as provided for by US labour laws, General Electric dictated its own terms as the management went 165 over the head of the unions and presented its own readymade and "final" version of the labour contract. At the same time, the corporation warned that neither the threat of a strike, nor a strike itself could make it retreat from its positions.

p To prevent possible strikes, Boulware developed a socalled communicative programme, under which specially selected and trained management representatives at every enterprise and in every shop undertook to brainwash, intimidate and misinform workers. Special attention was devoted to applying pressure and using blackmail tactics on the families of workers and to generate support for the corporation from local politicians, newspapermen, businessmen, the clergy, etc., that is, anyone who might be able to exert some measure of influence on the workers. If, however, despite all such preventative measures, a union called a strike, then General Electric would resort to other underhanded methods of struggle. It would promptly inspire separate groups of corrupt workers to request the National Labour Relations Board to determine, by holding an election among the workers, to what extent the striking union was authorised to represent the employees of the given enterprise. The company would make wide use of strikebreakers recruited from other parts of the country, and with the help of their votes succeed in depriving the union of its right to represent the workers.

p General Electric knew full well that Boulwarism could work only if the unions confronting it were weak and disunited, and that is why its main efforts were aimed at splitting the big United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, to which an overwhelming majority of General Electric workers belonged.

p Immediately after the militant union was expelled from the CIO for "communist domination", the company, jointly with the Rightist leaders of the CIO, began to exert maximum efforts to split and destroy it. To this end, a competing union, the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, was established in 1949 and placed at its head was CIO secretary-treasurer James Carey, who had entered into open collusion with the General Electric management. The company administration and the Rightist 166 labour leaders stopped at nothing to intimidate the members of the progressive union and get them to switch over to the newly created one. They made extensive use of the weapon of anti-communism as they blackmailed and persecuted workers. How charged with hate and hysteria was the atmosphere in which the offensive against progressive unions took

place was illustrated, for example, by the following statement made by James Carey in January 1950 at a conference of anti-communist organisations in New York: "In the last war we united with the Communists to fight the fascists. In the next war we will unite with the fascists to fight the Communists." [166•1

p Carey and his assistants, taking advantage of the situation characterised by unrestrained persecution of progressive labour forces, undertook to organise elections among workers for the right to represent them at enterprises which had contracts with the United Electrical Workers' Union. As a result, the very first round of the 1950 election ended in a split of the working class, a split which widened in subsequent years. Whereas, previously, one union represented the overwhelming majority of the workers in the electrical industry, by 1964, there were 15 unions with numerous locals, representing workers employed at the various plants and enterprises of General Electric, Westinghouse, Sylvania, Radio Corporation of America and other companies. [166•2

p Thus, with the help of Rightist labour leaders, General Electric got the union fission it wanted and needed to make it easier to pursue its policy of Boulwarism. In 1948 and 1949, that is, at a time when the progressive United Electrical Workers Union was being persecuted from every direction, the corporation employed the tactic of Boulwarism during negotiations with the union for the first time. The considerably weakened union was in no position to countervail the power of General Electric and was forced to accept the contract terms imposed by the corporation. The terms were exceptionally cynical: the company described its categorical refusal to raise wages as "beneficial to the workers themselves". A wage increase, General Electric maintained, 167 would only lead to a rise in prices and unemployment and, consequently, harm the "employees, customers, the owners of the business and the general public". [167•1

p In the beginning, when the General Electric Company was trying to destroy the progressive United Electrical Workers Union, it created the most favourable conditions for Carey's divisive union. Carey himself was accepted in the "upper circle" of the corporation where he was flattered and fawned upon.

p But soon the situation began to change. During the 1950 negotiations Carey got a rather cold reception when he came to the conference room to discuss the terms of a new contract. The goal had been achieved, the unions were split, and the company no longer felt it necessary to do Carey and his union any favours.

p Throughout the 1950s a fierce struggle developed between the two erstwhile "friends"—the General Electric Company, on the one hand, and the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, on the other. Every time it came to negotiations, the same thing happened: the company would make its "final" proposals, and the union would reject them. But after General Electric easily succeeded in imposing its terms on unorganised workers and small rival unions, Carey's union would be forced to go back on its word and accept the company's proposals retroactively.

p The repeated defeats suffered by the union caused unrest and dissatisfaction among the workers. Finally, during contract negotiations with General Electric in the summer of 1960, Carey, taking the sentiments of his union's membership into account, was forced to make a strike threat. The company, as always, flatly refused to make any concessions, and on October 2, 70,000 workers at 57 General Electric plants went on strike.

p The corporation's main and most effective weapon against the strikers was the policy of Boulwarism, a policy to whose success the leaders of International Union of Electrical Workers had themselves contributed for a number of years. The company's use of bribery and blackmail, 168 strikebreaking and lack of unity in the union itself, and the unwillingness and inability of the union's leaders to wage a serious struggle, all this predetermined the outcome of the strike. In a matter of 20 days, the union gave up the fight and accepted the company's terms. It was a serious labour defeat; it was "the worst setback any union had received in a nationwide strike since World War II", wrote *The New York Times*. [168•1

p US monopoly capital cheered the General Electric Company's great victory. The press began to call on other corporations to use Boulwarism in their labour relations. Immediately after the strike, the National Association of Manufacturers—the American monopolies' headquarters— named General Electric's board chairman Ralph T. Cordiner "Man of the Year for 1960".

p After the 1960 strike defeat, the position of the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers deteriorated even further. By 1964, it had lost 50,000 members. The agreement concluded with General Electric in 1964 was assessed as a fresh defeat. Furthermore, the fierce struggle for power that had been going on for several years within the union leadership between the president, James Carey, the secretary-treasurer, Al Hartnett, and others, completely destroyed the membership's confidence in their leaders. With increasing frequency and boldness, rankand-file members criticised their leaders' conciliatory policy, protested against the lack of unity among the unions representing electric, radio and machine workers and demanded that they be organised into an effective weapon against the monopolies. In the spring of 1965, Carey was ousted from the leadership of the electrical workers' union.

p The growing militancy of the great body of union members, their unwillingness to follow reactionary leaders, and the long and dismal history of relations with General Electric and other monopoly giants—all this prompted the new leadership of the International Union of Electrical Workers to display a greater understanding of current problems and to announce a programme that to a certain extent reflected the wishes of the rank-and-file. An important shift in the 169 union's policy was seen in 1966, when, at the initiative of its leaders and the AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Department (then headed by Walter Reuther), an attempt was made during negotiations with General Electric to unite unions representing the various kinds of workers in the electrical industry with a view to giving an effective rebuff to Boulwarism.

p Instead of presenting their demands individually as they had done in the past, eleven AFL-CIO unions with locals at General Electric plants worked out a common set of contract conditions and appeared jointly at the negotiations with General Electric. Despite the company's inflexible stand and the support it got from the Johnson Administration, the united front tactic paid off for the workers. For the first time in the history of Boulwarism, General Electric was compelled to make certain concessions to the unions.

p In the following years, as the cost of living soared and inflation got worse due to the war in Vietnam, the struggle between the unions and the company reached an exceptionally high level of intensity. In the fall of 1969, when the collective contract between General Electric and the unions expired, 150,000 electrical workers staged a strike to which the attention of the whole country was riverted for 14 weeks. Long before the strike broke out, the management of the company had laid careful plans to "teach the unions a lesson"; it had accumulated large reserve stocks of goods with the intention of holding out against the workers until they capitulated. The strike was of fundamental importance for the entire American working class since General Electric, supported by the White House and the Congress, was playing the role of monopoly capital's big stick. Labour contracts covering over 5,000,000 workers were due to expire in 1970, and a General Electric victory would serve as the signal for a fresh offensive by big business against the rights and living standard of American workers. "On the outcome of the GE strike," predicted *Newsweek* magazine, "will largely depend the shape of negotiations that will be coming up in some of the country's biggest industries in the year ahead." [169•1

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p The only reliable weapon that could make the workers' struggle maximally effective was unity. And for the first time in 20 years that unity was achieved to the fullest extent. Despite the differences dividing them in the past, 13 unions representing workers employed by General Electric (the 14th union joined them in January 1970) succeeded in forming an effective collective bargaining coalition. The foundation of this coalition was a joint action agreement made between the International Union of Electrical Workers and the progressive United Electric Workers Union, which, having withstood all the ordeals during the years of persecution and repression, was still going strong as the second largest union in the industry.

p Seeking at any cost to break the strikers' resistance, the GE management undertook strenuous efforts to disunite the workers and split the union coalition. Following the traditional policy of Boulwarism, General Electric launched an intense campaign to recruit strikebreakers, used all kinds of dirty methods of psychological warfare against the strikers and their families, and did everything possible to discredit the leaders and activists of the unions. [170•1

p The serious danger hanging over the unions united the strikers even more closely. Support came from all the unions in the country—from progressive and independent unions, from the Alliance for Labour Action and even from the conservative leadership of the AFL-CIO, forced to take cognizance of the sentiments of the masses who regarded

the strike as a test of strength for the entire labour movement. Throughout the country, General Electric products were boycotted and funds were collected to help the strikers and their families. The firm resolve of the workers to keep fighting until victory was won, the powerful support coming from so many other unions and the militant strike leadership finally broke down the resistance of the company: for the first time in twenty years, the strikebreaking policy of Boulwarism was dealt a crushing blow. General Electric was forced to sign a single collective agreement satisfying all of the workers' fundamental demands, including their most 171 important demand for a sliding wage scale geared to the cost-of-living index.

p The important victory of the union coalition over one of the biggest companies in the United States and the second largest Pentagon contractor had wide repercussions. It dealt a serious blow to the anti-labour policy of the Nixon Administration and the monopolies, whose objective, as noted by General Secretary of the Communist Party of the USA, Gus Hall, is to destroy the unions as an effective weapon and to shift the burden of the crisis of American capitalism on to the shoulders of the working people. At the same time, the success of the strike demonstrated the power of working-class solidarity and the possibilities of a united labour front. As the labour magazine, *Labor Today*, wrote in early 1970, "resistance to the GE monopoly is not the end but the beginning for the trade union movement as the Nixon-Agnew Administration attempts to deliver on its pre-election promises to Wall Street. The process of coordinated bargaining will have to be further developed to effectively contend with the conglomerates. Maximum trade union unity is still in the making. A victory in GE will move it a giant step forward." [171•1

p Looking back, an increasingly marked tendency could be observed over the past years for unions to combine forces for more effective action against the monopolies. The united front tactic, employed primarily by independent unions and unions included in the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department, has enabled some sections of the working class to win significant victories. *The Christian Science Monitor*, expressing the concern of the ruling circles over unified action encouraged by the IUD, once wrote that "if it (the IUD— *AM.}* succeeds in unifying dissimilar locals negotiating with multiunion employers, and in holding them together until all settle satisfactory through a strike, labour troubles will reach into new areas". [171•2

p A vivid illustration of the growing movement toward joint and solidary actions in the struggle for the vital rights and interests of working people has been the successful 172 cooperation between longshoremen and seamen, between various unions in the printing industry, between unions representing various categories of airline employees, etc. Special mention should be made of the effective cooperation between the independent progressive International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) of the West Coast and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. The foundations were laid in the spring of 1962, when these two former rivals signed an agreement to set up the Pacific Coast Warehouse Council through which they would jointly work out the terms for new collective contracts and ensure maximum worker co-operation in the struggle with the employers. More than once in the years that followed the workers, by putting up a united front during strikes, forced the employers to make substantial concessions.

Solidary actions markedly strengthened the positions of these unions and created new favourable conditions for their further all-round co-operation. "Every effort should be made to continue and strengthen the alliance" between the ILWU and the Teamsters' Union, declared a resolution adopted by the ILWU 18th Biennial Convention. "The alliance has borne fruit for the rank-and-file of both unions; it has paid off." [172•1

p The successes scored by unions adopting the united front tactic had a big impact on other sections of the working class. In May 1968, 60 AFL-CIO unions with a total of about two million members formed the Transportation Conference, the aim of which organisation, as stated by its president C. L. Dennis, was "to strengthen inter-union ties between all transportation labour to protect the jobs and future of our members". [172•2

p Another tendency observed in recent years has been for American labour unions to strengthen ties and establish cooperation with foreign labour centres and to seek unity with them for purposes of collective bargaining with international corporations.

p The continued concentration and internationalisation of capital and the consequent growing threat that American 173 monopolies will use their foreign branches in the struggle against US workers prompts the major unions to seek new ways to effectively counteract the global power of the supercorporations. A development worth noting in this connection is the initiative displayed by the UAW, which has to deal with corporations owning plants in 64 countries. [173•1 In accordance with a UAW proposal, a World Auto Workers Conference was convened in 1964 in Frankfort on Main, to discuss measures that could be taken to protect the interests of workers from different countries who were employed at plants belonging to the big auto corporations. The conference adopted a resolution to examine the possibility of setting up World Auto Councils within the International Metal Workers Federation (an affiliate of the ICFTU), and also established a strike solidarity fund.

p The Second World Auto Workers Conference was held in 1966 in Detroit, with representatives of 16 unions from 14 countries taking part. The conference set up the World Auto Councils and adopted a programme of common union collective bargaining demands. Among the major demands were: acknowledgement of the right to free union activity at all auto plants; introduction of a uniform international wage increase scale; guaranteed annual incomes for workers; "humanisation" of working conditions in production; reduction in working hours through a shorter workweek and longer vacations; a lower retirement age. [173•2

p As American monopolies penetrate on a broader and broader scale into the economies of other capitalist countries, other sections of the American working class—steelworkers, seamen and other groups—realise the urgency of strengthening international labour solidarity. Proposals were made at a Chicago convention of the United Steelworkers of America, held in August 1968, to establish close ties with similar unions in other countries in order to work out a joint 174 programme of wage increases in the steel industry. In addressing the convention many delegates urged the union leadership to take immediate steps in this direction and to invite representatives of steelworkers' unions

from other countries to take part in organising a world steelworkers' council that would countervail the "world steel trust".

p An exceptionally important factor in strengthening the American labour movement is the struggle for unity between white and black workers in the unions. In his report to the 18th National Convention of the Communist Party of the USA, Gus Hall stressed that "the very essence of working class unity, which is the key to social progress, is the unity of Negro and white workers". [174•1

p During the 1960s, which saw both a tremendous upsurge in the civil rights struggle and a marked intensification of labour union activity, there emerged a tendency for the two streams in the anti-monopoly struggle—the labour movement and the civil rights movement—to come closer together. The UAW, the Steelworkers' Union, the United Rubber Workers, the Electric Workers' Union, the ILWU, the Transport Workers Union, the American Federation of Teachers, and many other unions (primarily unions in the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department) declared their support of the civil rights movement and actively helped in the black people's struggle to abolish social discrimination. Numerous instances of joint action by white and black working people have clearly shown the growing unity between the black civil rights movement and the labour movement. There were the sit-ins and the freedom marches in the South in the early 1960's; massive marches on Washington in 1963 and 1968; the strike protesting discrimination in wages against black workers at the Scripto factory in Atlanta in 1965; the militant strikes by city employees in Memphis in 1968, and of hospital employees in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1969; and many other examples.

p An important role in the fight against racism and the struggle to strengthen the alliance between whites and blacks has been played by the Negro American Labour Council (NALC), founded in May 1960 at the initiative of 175 Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and the only black member of the AFL-CIO Executive Council. The NALC has done important work in organising the struggle against racial discrimination in industry, in eliminating racist practices in unions, in drawing black workers into unions and providing for their representation in the union leadership. The NALC's militant position on questions of racial equality and the growing understanding within the unions themselves that white and black workers have common basic interests has helped expand the movement to abolish racial discrimination and segregation in labour's ranks. Many unions and locals set up special anti-discrimination committees, and provisions excluding black workers from membership were struck from the constitutions of many organisations. [175•1

p The upsurge in the struggle for equal rights for black people and the growing support of this struggle on the part of trade unions have had a definite influence on the position of the conservative labour leadership. The AFL-CIO Executive Council expressed its support of all legislation aimed at protecting the civil rights of black people, and in 1963 passed a special resolution prohibiting racial discrimination in labour unions. But despite repeated declarations about the need to "put our own house in order" and to abolish the last vestiges of racial discrimination within the ranks of the AFL-CIO, Meany and his

supporters among the more conservative labour bureaucrats representing the old AFL craft unions in fact still pay homage to jimcrowism and undertake no effective measures to eliminate racial inequality.

p A manifestation of the shameful system of segregation is the stubborn unwillingness on the part of some labour leaders to admit blacks and representatives of other ethnic minorities into their labour organisations. For example, in 176 1969 (almost seven years after constitutional barriers against “coloured” workers were lifted), blacks still made up less than one half of one per cent of the membership in five key building trades’ unions with a total of 330,000 members. The situation was even worse in the plumbers’ union, where blacks made up only two-tenths of one per cent of the membership. [176•1 How strongly racism is entrenched in certain craft unions was demonstrated by the disgraceful strike staged in the spring of 1964 by a group of privileged workers from New York’s Local 2 of the plumbers’ union (where, incidentally, labour boss George Meany began his career), protesting the hiring of one black worker and two Puerto Ricans. [176•2

p In the second half of the 1960s, the struggle of black workers against racism in industry and in the labour unions reached new heights. The most dynamic manifestation of this was the widespread emergence of black caucuses—a movement in which black union members conducted an independent struggle to abolish the various forms of discrimination. The emergence of the black caucuses was a militant response to the racist practices of employers and their influence on trade union life, an answer to the policy pursued by reactionary labour leaders who impeded the struggle for genuine racial equality. In assessing the significance of the black caucuses, Gus Hall stressed at the 19th National Convention of the Communist Party of the USA, that they constitute a vitally important form of struggle against conciliation in the labour movement, and open up new prospects for achieving unity between blacks and whites based on complete equality. "The high-level struggle of the black caucuses against racism,” said Hall, "is in the interests of the whole class.” [176•3

p An important aspect of the struggle of the black caucuses is their call for broad representation of blacks at all levels of union leadership. This is of fundamental importance in the struggle against racism because it hits at the positions of reformist leaders who have for years implemented 177 discriminatory policies. In June 1968, the Negro American Labour Council held its Seventh Convention at which over 1,000 black union members were present. Expressing the sentiments of the black caucuses, the convention sharply criticised the policy of the AFL-CIO Executive Council and called for changes in the structure of that organisation. In his address to the convention, NALC president Cleveland Robinson said: "The dynamic, progressive, demanding and dissatisfied voice of labour is nowhere present in the top echelons.... We believe that the time has come for change in the structure of the top body of the labour movement in order to make possible representation from the most oppressed, the Negro, Puerto Rican, and the Mexican American, in the highest councils of labour.” [177•1

p The vigorous efforts of the black caucuses to promote the nomination of blacks to leadership posts in labour organisations has led to definite changes in a number of unions.

For example, in the course of the merger of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America with the United Packinghouse Workers, three black members were elected as vice-presidents of the newly created union. [177•2 Blacks have also been elected in recent years to various union posts (presidents of locals, regional directors, members of executive councils) in the Auto Workers', Steelworkers', Electrical Workers' and other unions. [177•3 However, in many unions where racial prejudice is still strong (primarily the craft unions), blacks still find it difficult to get elected to official posts even where they make up a substantial part of the membership of a given union. [177•4

p As the events of the 1960s have shown, intensification of the struggle against racial discrimination in the trade unions makes a big impact on the labour movement as a whole. Despite all the complexities and difficulties caused by the influence of pernicious racist ideology on various categories of working people, this struggle is a militant school for 178 developing proletarian solidarity and paves the way for a genuine alliance of workers—black and white—on a class basis.

p Another trend observable in the second half of the 1960s was toward an increase in the ranks of the labour movement. This fact is of special interest because ever since 1955, that is, after the merger of the AFL and the CIO, American trade unions had been losing more members than they gained each year. During that same period, along with the absolute drop in trade union membership, the proportion of organised workers in the gainfully employed population also fell. In the period between 1956 and 1964, the overall drop was from 24.8 to 21.9 per cent, while in the most organised sector (non-agricultural), the drop was from 33.4 to 28.9 per cent. [178•1 This drop in the relative number of trade union members occurred most of all in such areas as the coal mining, ore mining, textile, metalworking and railroad industries.

p There were three main reasons for the substantial drop in trade union memberships: layoffs due to automation and other technological improvements; the existence of antilabour laws which impeded trade union growth [178•2 ; and sluggish efforts on the part of the trade unions themselves to draw in new members. Various membership recruitment projects adopted during that period by the AFL-CIO leadership never got further than the paper they were written on. Bureaucratic labour leaders failed to take any really effective steps to organise the millions of unskilled workers, and above all black labourers who make up the majority of this category of worker; the army of agricultural workers who labour under the hardest of conditions; and the growing contingents of white collar workers. In 1959, the AFL-CIO launched a 179 trial campaign to organise migrant agricultural workers in California. In 1961, when the campaign was just beginning to gain momentum, the Executive Council decided to call it off. This decision was reversed by an AFL-CIO convention, but thereafter no vigorous action to organise agricultural workers was undertaken.

p Another unsuccessful venture took place in 1962, when the AFL-CIO Executive Council inaugurated a so-called co-ordinated organising campaign (in which many AFL-CIO unions took part) in Los Angeles. After four months, only 7,000 of the 500,000

unorganised workers in that city had been drawn into unions. Another AFL-CIO organising campaign in the Baltimore-Washington area produced similarly poor results. [179•1

p The first serious effort at organising unorganised workers was undertaken in the beginning of 1963 by the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department, headed by Walter Reuther. It was originally planned as an 18-month campaign, for which $4,000,000 was allocated. [179•2 The initial results proved to be rather modest; only 44,244 workers had joined unions in the 18-month period. [179•3

p In November 1965, an Industrial Union Department convention adopted a resolution calling for a new campaign, and outlined more effective measures aimed at organising millions of poor workmen, that is, that category of workers, which, as the newspaper, *The Worker*, pointed out, had always been largely ignored by the American labour movement. The convention's decision reflected union rank– andfile's growing dissatisfaction with the AFL-CIO top bureaucracy's passiveness and inaction in this vitally important area, as well as the alarm felt by a definite portion of the country's labour leaders with respect to the halted growth in AFL-CIO membership.

p The efforts of the Industrial Union Department and individual trade unions produced some tangible results; in 1966 and 1967, AFL-CIO unions signed up a total of about 180 1,500,000 new members. In 1965 and 1966, the United Steelworkers of America alone added 77,000 new members to its ranks as a result of the biggest membership drive ever carried out by that union. [180•1 Between 1964 and the end of 1967, the Auto Workers' Union grew markedly (by almost 300,000 members) [180•2 ; and 44,000 new members came into the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers between April 1965 (after the change in leadership) and September 1966. The latter union set up locals at 160 enterprises, 21 of which were in the South. [180•3 In a span of two years (also after a change in leadership in 1965) the mechanics' union increased its membership by 170,000. [180•4 The American Federation of Teachers showed a 27 per cent membership increase between 1965 and 1967 [180•5 , and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees had a 60 per cent membership growth between 1964 and 1968. [180•6 Even greater gains in this direction have been achieved in recent years by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

p A significant aspect of the overall trend has been the marked growth in trade union ranks taking place since the mid-1960s in the southern states. In Arkansas, Kentucky and Florida, for example, trade union memberships have shown increases of 65 per cent, 21 per cent and some 50 per cent, respectively. [180•7 In all of the southern states (except Alabama), the rate of trade union membership growth between 1964 and 1968 was double that in most other states. This progressive shift in the anti-labour citadel of the United States, the racist states of the South, has been due to active cooperation between the labour and black civil rights movements.

p An especially successful campaign has been waged in recent years to organise migrant farm workers, the most disenfranchised and exploited working people in the 181 country.

In the course of a fierce struggle with the monopolies and state authorities in California, Texas and the East Coast, the United Farm Workers Organising Committee, which had been set up in 1966, succeeded in organising thousands of farm workers, many of whom were blacks and Mexican-Americans. The labour victory scored in April 1967, after an 18-month strike headed by the farm workers' union against the big Di Giorgio Fruit Corp. in California, lent impetus to a massive flow of farm workers into unions.

p A resolution of the 18th National Convention of the Communist Party of the USA noted that "the grape strike in California in which the farm workers, most of them Mexican-Americans, were supported by the trade union movement, the civil rights and Mexican-American organisations, marks an historic departure in the organisation of the farm workers." [181•1

p In 1970, after five years of tense struggle, the United Farm Workers Organising Committee, headed by militant leader Cesar Chavez, finally won official government and employer recognition. On July 29, 1970, the union signed a collective contract, which provided for a wage increase and improved working conditions, with the owners of 26 big vineyards, the first such contract in the history of American agriculture. By early August, farm workers' unions were recognised by 70 grape growers and contracts covering workers on 75 per cent of the state's vineyards were signed. [181•2

p Of great potential significance for the entire labour movement is a new "massive organising campaign" announced by the Alliance for Labour Action, to take place primarily in the South. The first phase of this campaign was begun in Atlanta, Georgia state, where the objective was to draw 50,000 unorganised workers into unions and to encourage citizens in the poor districts of the city to take an active part in the struggle for their civil and economic rights.

p The complex and insoluble problems confronting the American working class in the struggle to protect its vital 182 interests have made many in the labour movement realise that labour must do more than make specific economic demands, that it must take an active part in the socio-political life of the country. The definite trend toward greater political action by trade unions observable in the 1960s was determined by a number of factors: the intensified struggle between labour and capital in the areas of job security and higher wages; the black civil rights movement; the movement against anti-labour laws; and the ever-growing protest against the war in Vietnam.

p Thus, contrary to the traditional stance taken by reformist AFL-CIO leaders, who try to keep the struggle of the masses within the bounds of primarily economic demands, an increasing number of rank-and-file trade unionists favour vigorous political action. More and more workers are coming to realise that many of the shortcomings in today's labour movement can be overcome only by moving away from political passiveness and "neutralism". Walter Reuther reflected these sentiments when, on the eve of the Fifth Constitutional Convention of the AFL-CIO, he stated that labour would not be able to solve the problems facing it as long as trade unions continue to regard themselves as

narrow economic pressure groups and hold on to obsolete notions of pure syndicalism. [182•1

p Many unions have stressed the need for radical socioeconomic reforms that would satisfy the needs of working people, in particular, the need for government economic planning. At the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Constitutional conventions of the AFL-CIO (in 1961, 1963 and 1965) and at conventions of some independent unions, resolutions were passed calling for the establishment of federal and state government planning agencies whose basic efforts would be aimed at ensuring full employment, with account taken of the growing labour force and higher labour productivity. [182•2 In his report to the 19th UAW Constitutional Convention, Walter Reuther emphasised that "it is time we in the 183 United States conquered our fear of the word 'planning' in national affairs." [183•1

p Increasingly frequent calls for the nationalisation of certain industries have come from within the labour movement in recent years. The llth Constitutional Convention of the Transport Workers Union of America, for example, recommended nationalising all rail, bus and air transportation services. The union's president, Michael J. Quill, said at that convention: "The profit motive must be taken out of these most important public services." [183•2

p In January 1965, twenty-two railroad workers' unions, representing 700,000 workers, or 80 per cent of the railroad employees in the country, came out in favour of nationalising the railroad industry. [183•3 The Railway Labour Executives' Association issued a special statement explaining this demand: "When a public utility in the hands of private managers simply refuses to recognise its obligations to the public, government ownership of that utility appears to be the only way of meeting the essential needs of the people. Railroad labour believes that such a condition exists in the railroad industry today." [183•4 This position, taken by conservative union leaders who had been firm supporters of private ownership in the railroad industry for over 45 years, was a clear reflection of the dissatisfaction within the American working class, which is losing faith in the "free enterprise" system. Sooner or later, wrote *The Worker* in this connection, workers in the coal and steel industries will inevitably come to the same conclusion as have the railroad workers' unions.

p The AFL-CIO leadership responded quite coldly to the proposal put forth by the 22 railroad workers' unions. However, two and a half years later (after the White House and Congress twice intervened to stop a national railroad strike), even such a champion of "free enterprise" as George Meany had to take the prevailing labour sentiments into 184 account and speak in terms of waging a campaign for nationalisation. In August 1967, speaking at a convention of the International Union of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, the AFL-CIO president declared that labour should seek government ownership of any enterprise where a strike is outlawed on the grounds that it affects the national interest. [184•1 Meany's statement, unprecedented for the Rightist AFL-CIO leadership, is eloquent testimony as to the extent to which the contradictions between labour and capital have been aggravated.

p Labour's determination to go beyond the narrow bounds of trade unionist demands (higher wages, shorter working time and better working conditions) manifested itself most clearly in the programme advanced by the Alliance for Labour Action. The May 1969 ALA conference adopted a resolution rating the existing structure of American trade unions as unsatisfactory and urged trade unions to become active "not only at the bargaining table, but, of equal importance, in the broad areas of national life where economic and social problems must be solved and community and national responsibilities must be met." [184•2 The conference outlined a programme of action for reforms in the fields of health care and taxation and for resolving the housing crisis, which is of unquestionable political significance.

p In recent years, a number of unions, above all progressive and independent unions, have actively opposed the monopolies' attempts to strangle the labour movement and undermine the working people's struggle to defend their rights. For example, at the initiative of the country's largest independent union, the Brotherhood of Teamsters, a conference was convened in March 1963 in Detroit to protest against attempts then being made to push new anti-labour laws through Congress. Taking part in the conference were thousands of delegates from independent unions as well as from unions affiliated with the AFL-CIO.

p As the threat of new anti-labour legislation continued to mount, many in labour's ranks saw the need for united 185 efforts to thwart the monopolies' plans aimed at "bridling" the labour movement. Teamster president James Hoffa gave expression to this growing conviction when he said, in the beginning of 1967, that "all of labour must prepare through its press, the public media and public mobilisation to defeat the wave of anti-strike bills this 90th Congress will receive and may try to pass". A similar call for united action was made by the ILWU.

p Labour's growing political activity in the 1960s was also seen in its broader involvement in election campaigns. During presidential and congressional elections, many unions conducted voter registration drives among their members and their families and urged everyone to vote. Unions worked especially hard and effectively during the 1964 presidential election, when the Republican candidate Barry Goldwater, representing the more extremist elements of that party, was running on a blatently reactionary and antilabour platform. The great organising work done during that election contest by the Committee on Political Education (COPE), the political organ of the AFL-CIO, helped make possible the fact that in 1964, 68 per cent of the congressional candidates supported by labour were elected (in 1962, 60 per cent of the candidates with labour support were elected, and in 1960, only 57 per cent). [185•1

p The situation in 1968 was more complicated. There was much indifference and political apathy in labour's ranks, the result of disenchantment with the Democratic Administration, which had failed to fulfil its basic promises. Despite persistent appeals by the AFL-CIO Executive Council to support the Democratic Party candidate, Hubert Humphrey, and despite an intensive campaign conducted by COPE to get him elected [185•2 , about 44 per cent of the trade unionists who voted in the election voted

against the Democrats (Republican Party candidate Richard Nixon got 29 per cent of the labour vote, and 15 per cent went to the leader of the ultra-Rightists, George Wallace). These voting results 186 (including the unexpectedly large number of votes received by Wallace's so-called third party) reflected, above all, growing voter dissatisfaction with the two-party system, which leaves working people with only the "choice" of voting for a bourgeois Democrat or a bourgeois Republican. It was no accident, therefore, that some unions—the ILWU and the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, for example—seeing no difference between the candidates of the two bourgeois parties, had to recommend to their members that they not vote at all in the presidential election.

p Most labour leaders support the two-party system and have traditionally supported the Democratic Party. But there are signs of growing political independence on the part of unions. Recognising the fact that, working within the framework of the present political structure of American trade unionism, unions have no substantial influence on Congress and the White House in matters directly effecting labour, many workers and labour leaders are beginning to re-examine their attitudes toward the role of unions in the political life of the country. More and more people are coming to the conclusion that one source of weakness in the labour movement is the absence of independent political organisations and labour candidates, free from the control of the bourgeois political machine.

p Heard at union conventions in recent years (at conventions of the transport workers', the auto workers', the steelworkers' unions, and others) have been many calls for labour to withdraw its weak-willed acquiescence to the twoparty system, to organise the labour vote into an independent political force and to nominate its own candidates who would be directly responsible to the labour movement. Addressing the llth Constitutional Convention of the Transport Workers Union, the union's president, Michael Quill, said: "To achieve the goals of full employment, job security and an ever improving standard of living, the American people cannot depend on the present two-party system which plays footsie under the table with the lives, fortunes and destinies of all of us. The labour movement in America if it is to survive, must sponsor and lead a third political party—a party of working people—free and independent 187 of the present dominant political groups." [187•1 It is noteworthy that in recent years increasing numbers of working men and labour leaders have become involved in year-round political activity (not merely at election time), organising and participating in mass demonstrations, supporting important prolabour legislation and promoting the unification of the labour and the black civil rights movements.

p Another indication of labour's drive toward a new level of political independence is the mounting struggle for peace, the growing organised opposition within labour's ranks to the government's reactionary foreign and domestic policies. In a statement issued on November 12, 1969, the Communist Party of the USA stressed that ever broader sections of labour are becoming aware "of the relationship between the struggle against imperialist aggression and racism, imperialist aggression and economic issues, imperialist aggression and democracy, between the struggle for peace and independent political action". [187•2

p For many years, Rightist labour leaders in America had given vigorous support to the government's imperialist policies and endorsed all of its aggressive moves in the international arena. Top AFL and CIO officials, following the lead of the most reactionary circles of monopoly capital, supported the policy of cold war against the Soviet Union and other socialist countries and endorsed all of the government's foreign policy "plans" and "doctrines", the creation of NATO, the Alliance for Progress, the aggression against Cuba, etc.

p At the first escalation of the Vietnam war, the AFL-CIO Executive Council, in line with its traditional policy, adopted a resolution approving the barbarous actions taken by American troops against the people of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and announced its full support of the policy and actions of the government and the President of the United States. [187•3

p However, as later events showed, this apologist position 188 of the AFL-CIO leadership, headed by Meany & Co., came into collision with a growing movement within the ranks of labour to end the war in Vietnam and against the government's militaristic foreign policy in general. Despite the AFL-CIO leadership's efforts to win the support of all AFLCIO unions for the government's aggressive course, many union activists, union locals and even entire unions called for a de-escalation of the war and a peaceful settlement of the expanding and dangerous conflict.

p In April 1965, the 16th Biennial Convention of the ILWU adopted a resolution demanding an end to US interference in the internal affairs of Vietnam. "Vietnamese have a right to resolve their own way," [188•1 the resolution noted. In April and May, similar statements were made by other influential unions, including the UAW, the AFT, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Clothing Workers Union, the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, as well as the Negro American Labour Council.

p At the 5th Annual Convention of the NALC, held in May 1965, a resolution was passed which included an appeal that the war "be stopped in Vietnam and a negotiated peace be initiated" by the nations involved. [188•2 Martin Luther King, Philip Randolph and other leaders of the black freedom movement played an active role in getting this resolution adopted. The position taken by the NALC was of fundamental importance, since condemnation of the aggression in Vietnam became the key factor promoting the tendency toward joint action by the two main anti-imperialist motive forces in the country—the labour movement and the black civil rights movement.

p In the summer of 1965, a group of labour figures in the State of New York set up a workers-for-peace organisation which began to take an active part in the anti-war movement: on its own initiative, the organisation arranged contacts between peace supporters and sponsored mass meetings. A big anti-war demonstration in New York in March 1966 189 included for the first time a column of workers representing labour unions. And in May of that year, representatives of 30 union locals in the New York area held a conference at which they announced the formation of the first Trade Union

Division of the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy. [189•1 The conference issued a political statement condemning the course toward "victory through escalation" and calling for negotiations in which all of the sides fighting in Vietnam would take part. The activity of labour activists in New York, sharply diverging from the policy of the AFL-CIO leadership, stimulated the growth in the number of active fighters for peace in the labour movement and sparked similar activity throughout the country.

p The years 1966 and 1967 saw many important union actions in defence of peace and for an end to the war in Vietnam. There was broad response, for example, to trade union conferences in Pittsburgh and Los Angeles at which regional divisions of SANE were founded; a conference was devoted to the struggle for peace, in which representatives of 32 unions from states in the Mid-West took part; the organised opposition of many unions to congressional candidates of both parties who supported the war in Vietnam. Trade Union Divisions of SANE carried on substantial antiwar explanatory work among union members and organised union participation in a number of anti-war demonstrations. Taking part in the largest of these—a massive demonstration in Chicago on March 25, 1967—were leaders of several AFL-CIO unions. It was a sign that some unions were rejecting the cold war approach to international problems that had prevailed in the labour movement for decades, a sign of a serious break with the reactionary policy pursued by the AFL-CIO leadership.

p Indicative of the increasing polarisation of forces within the labour movement was the National Labour Leadership Assembly for Peace, held in November 1967, in Chicago. Taking part in this assembly, which was organised on the 190 initiative of the leaders of the UAW, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the International Woodworkers of America, and the Amalgamated Meat Cutters, were 523 delegates from 50 national unions (including independent and progressive unions). Although the delegates held differing views on the ways and means of stopping the war, they were unanimous in their conviction that it had to be stopped. Many of the delegates who addressed the assembly criticised the pro-imperialist course followed by the Meany-Lovestone group in the AFL-CIO and condemned the Johnson Administration for waging an immoral war in Vietnam. The assembly adopted a Statement of Policy which noted that "despite the unwavering support of the administration's Vietnam policy in the official councils of labour, this assembly has demonstrated that there exists at all levels in our unions the same disquiet, frustration and opposition that characterise the American people as a whole." [190•1 The assembly urged unions to work toward a rapid and just cessation of the Vietnam war "so that we may devote our wealth and energies to the struggle against poverty, disease, hunger and bigotry". [190•2

p The Chicago National Labour Leadership Assembly for Peace attracted broad public attention; it was the first time, the press noted, that such a large group of labour leaders had adopted a clear-cut anti-war position. In his book, *American Labor and the Indochina War*, the well-known Marxist historian and outstanding expert on the history of the labour movement, Philip S. Foner, stressed that the assembly had "destroyed the impression of a monolithic labour structure in support of the war in Indochina". [190•3

The assembly thus marked an important change in the social spectrum of the anti-war movement; unions were now an integral part of it.

p The development of union participation in the movement was given added impetus by the resolutions passed at the founding conference of the Alliance for Labour Action in May 1969. The conference, representing the biggest unions 191 in the country, expressed its open opposition to the basic trends in the government's foreign policy and condemned the positions taken by the AFL-CIO Executive Council with respect to the war. October and November 1969 saw the largest anti-war demonstrations in the country's history. Among these were a massive march on Washington in which tens of thousands of union members took part, and huge demonstrations and meetings in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Detroit and other cities. An active part in these events was played by the Alliance for Labour Action and many individual unions, representing a total membership of over 5,000,000 workers.

p The invasion of Cambodia by American armed forces in April 1970 stirred up a storm of indignation throughout the United States. The anti-war movement rose to a new level, and labour's participation in it reached unprecedented proportions.

p The administration's reckless policy in Southeast Asia was sharply condemned by the ALA, by many independent unions, and by rank-and-file members, middle echelon leaders and even some top leaders of AFL-CIO affiliated unions. Labour's growing opposition to the war was for the first time reflected in the AFL-CIO Executive Council. Although Meany's group, as usual, came out with a statement expressing its unequivocal approval of the administration's aggressive war policy, some members of the Executive Council finally spoke out against it. This split in the top organ of the AFL-CIO was not accidental; it was the direct result of the growing pressure by anti-war rank-and-filers on their union leaders. *Butcher Workman*, journal of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen, summed up the situation in May 1970, when it wrote that approval of the Cambodian venture by the AFL-CIO leadership was out of line with the sentiments of the 13 million members of this federation. Rank-and-file union members did not support President Nixon's policy. Anti-war resolutions adopted in trade union organisations in May and June 1970 called for the immediate withdrawal of American troops from Southeast Asia and stressed that the deteriorating economic position of the American working people, the rising cost of living, the growing tax burden, the constant 192 growth of unemployment, as well as the wave of repression against democratic forces in the country, all stemmed from the "dirty war" in Indochina.

p A new militancy appeared as labour's involvement in the anti-war movement grew. Work stoppages occurred in many plants during 1970 as an expression of opposition to the war. In Detroit, the US auto manufacturing centre, such stoppages occurred at about 20 plants. [192•1 Some union locals urged the AFL-CIO leaders "to call a nationwide general strike of all AFL-CIO members in protest against President Nixon's actions to continue and expand the war in Southeast Asia". [192•2

p There was also a growing realisation within the labour movement of the need for unity with other anti-war forces. In many demonstrations workers marched side by side with students. A Labour-Student Coalition for Peace was organised in New York and similar organisations sprang up in other parts of the country. On the national level, the trend toward establishing a firm alliance between labour and student groups and other anti-war organisations was reflected in the establishment in the fall of 1970 of a National Coalition for a Responsible Congress. The new organisation had on its board Leonard Woodcock, UAW president, Jerry Wurf, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and other eminent labour figures.

p The wide and vigorous upsurge of labour opposition to the war was extremely disquieting to the ruling circles and their "labour lieutenants", the top AFL-CIO leaders.

p The forces of reaction tried to inspire the more politically immature and conservative elements of the working class to stage counter-demonstrations against the anti-war forces, with the idea of demonstrating that unions were "patriotic" and supported the government's foreign policy. In May 1970, several hundred helmeted construction workers, armed with crowbars and lead pipes, attacked the participants of a peaceful anti-war demonstration. Similar attacks occurred in St. Louis and elsewhere, though on a smaller scale. The 193 big-business press, which usually gave scant attention to anti-war actions by trade unionists, heaped front-page praise on the pro-war "patriots". The outrages committed against the anti-war demonstrators were widely reported as being spontaneous, unorganised actions by rank-and-file workers, although it was soon revealed that construction firms and pro-imperialist racist union officials had joined in promoting and encouraging what came to be known as the hard hat demonstrations. [193•1 After a pro-war rally on May 20, organised by Peter J. Brennan, president of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York, Brennan and other pro-war union officials were invited to the White House to receive the personal thanks for their "work" from President Nixon.

p Schemes to encourage other unions and the more politically backward strata of workers to take similar pro– administration actions failed completely. The hard hat rampages aroused widespread indignation within the labour movement and in many construction union locals, as well. It soon turned out that construction workers, deceived by the monopolies and reactionary union leaders, were among the first to feel the burdensome economic effects of the war. In a matter of only a few months after the widely publicised pro-war demonstration the Republican Administration, stepping in to support the big construction firms, declared a "state of emergency" in the building trades industry and ordered a ceiling on wage increases for construction workers. The government's actions evoked bitter resentment among the workers and put an end to the inglorious love affair between the Republican Administration and the construction workers. By March 1971, *The New York Times* was to write: "With hard hat construction workers marching, for their own economic reasons, side by side with anti-war protesters, there is no longer any easy White House appeal to the 'silent majority' in fact." [193•2

p Labour's participation in the anti-war movement reached proportions unprecedented in the post-war decades. During a three-week campaign for peace in April and May 194 (in which millions of people participated), unions took an active part in organising demonstrations in Washington, San Francisco and other cities. In San Francisco, for example, following a decision by the San Francisco Labour Council, all unions supported a massive march on April 24 against the war in Indochina. These mass demonstrations (as well as public opinion polls which showed that from 64 to 73 per cent of the country's trade unionists demanded US troop withdrawal from the countries of Southeast Asia) [194•1 indicated that a substantial part of the American labour movement was disassociating itself from the pro-imperialist policy of the top AFL-GIO Rightist leadership.

p The Communist Party of the USA has highly assessed the upsurge and growth of the labour-for-peace movement. *Political Affairs*, the party's theoretical organ, has noted that, for the first time in the nation's history, important and perhaps even crucial sections of the labour movement have come out publicly against the imperialist military policy of their government. This movement for peace helps strengthen the tendencies toward trade union independence in all spheres, and above all, in the sphere of foreign policy, for support of the foreign policy of the ruling class has, in the past, been one of the chains that bound the trade unions to the two-party system.

p The new trends in the labour movement stem from the intensified class struggle in the United States in the sixties and the failure of the reformist policy pursued by Rightist labour leaders in the face of the monopolies' offensive against the vital interests and rights of the working class.

The changes that have taken place and are now taking place in the position of the working class and in the trade union movement anticipate labour's liberation from the bonds of "class collaboration" and its disintegrating consequences. As noted in the *New Program of the Communist Party, USA*, "Once liberated from the bonds of 'class partnership', once labour asserts its political independence and confronts its corporate enemies as a class in the political arena, once the organisation of added millions is a reality, 195 labour can fulfil its destiny as the leading and most dynamic force in a new anti-monopoly alignment of the people of the United States, and as that force which will lead them to socialism." [195•1

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TEXT SIZE

Notes

[153•1] *World Marxist Review*, March 1967, p. 21.

[153•2] *UAW Solidarity*, February 1967.

[154•1] *Unite for Peace, Negro Freedom, Labor's Advance, Socialism*, p. 28.

[155•1] Gus Hall, *For a Meaningful Alternative*, p. 31.

[155•2] *AFL-CIO. Free Trade Union News*, June 1968.

[156•1] *UAW Solidarity*, August 1968.

[156•2] Ibid.

[156•3] *Labor*, September 21, 1968.

[157•1] *Resolutions Adopted at the Founding Conference of the Alliance for Labor Action*, Washington, D.C., May 26–27, 1969, p. 6.

[158•1] Gus Hall, "Toward Unity Against World Imperialism", *Political Affairs*, August 1969, p. 8.

[158•2] *Daily World*, February 11, 1971.

[159•1] *The Wall Street Journal*, November 17, 1970; January 26, 1971.

[159•2] *Business Week*, March 6, 1971, p. 97.

[160•1] *Monthly Labor Review*, April 1969, p. 83.

[160•2] *L'Humanite*, February 26, 1969.

[161•1] In 1949 and 1950, at the height of the anti-communist hysteria sweeping the country, the CIO leadership succeeded in getting eleven particularly militant unions with a total membership of about one million expelled from the organisation. One reason for the expulsions was that those unions had refused to support Truman and his cold war policy during the 1948 presidential election. By the early 1960s only four of the eleven progressive unions remained in existence—the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union of the West Coast, the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers and the American Communications Association.

[161•2] The teamsters' and a number of other unions were expelled from the AFL-CIO in 1957 under the pretext of a drive against corruption. The expulsions came after several years of investigation by a Senate subcommittee headed by notoriously reactionary Senator McClellan. The subcommittee's objective was to discredit organised labour, arouse public suspicion of labour unions and pave the way for new and stiffer anti-labour laws.

[162•1] *Directory of National and International Labor Unions in the United States, 1969*. Bulletin No. 1665, US Department of Labour, 1970, pp. 64–65.

[162•2] Gus Hall, *On Course—the Revolutionary Process, Report to tht 19th National Convention of the Communist Party, USA*, New Outlook Publishers, New York, June J969, p. 37.

[163•1] *The Worker*, January 24, 1967.

[164•1] In 1947, the progressive United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America had about 600,000 members, working at 1,375 plants throughout the country, 110,000 of whom worked at General Electric plants (H. R. Northrup, *Boulwarism. The Labor Relations Policies of the General Electric Company*, Ann Arbor, 1964, p. 18.)

[166•1] *The New York Herald Tribune*, January 20, 1950.

[166•2] *The New York Times*, December 17, 1964.

[167•1] Herbert R. Northrup, op. cit., p. 52.

[168•1] *The New York Times*, October 25, 1960.

[169•1] *Newsweek*, November 10, 1969, p. 41.

[170•1] *US News & World Report*, December 29, 1969, pp. 38–39.

[171•1] *Labor 'Today*, January-February 1970, p. 8.

[171•2] *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 13, 1965.

[172•1] *The Dispatcher*, May 2, 1969.

[172•2] *Monthly Labor Review*, July 1968, p. 69.

[173•1] The major American auto corporations have penetrated the economy of nearly every country in the capitalist world. Ford Motor, for example, has plants in 34 countries, Chrysler Corporation in 33 and General Motors in 24. Plants located outside the United States account for 54 per cent of Ford Motor's production, 39.9 per cent of Chrysler's and 28 per cent of General Motors'.

[173•2] *AFL-CIO News*, June 11, 1966.

[174•1] Gus Hall, *For a Radical Change—the Communist View*, p. 26.

[175•1] In the summer of 1963, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen rescinded the discriminatory clauses in its constitution. This was the last

AFL-CIO union to take this action. However, as brought out at the Fifth Constitutional Convention of the AFL-CIO, 19 AFL-CIO unions still had a total of 172 locals in which racial discrimination was practised. (*Proceedings of the Fifth Constitutional Convention of the AFL-CIO*, Third Day, p. 23.)

[176•1] *Daily World*, October 1, 1969.

[176•2] *People's World*, May 23, 1964.

[176•3] Gus Hall, *On Course—the Revolutionary Process*, p. 39.

[177•1] *The Worker*, June 2, 1968.

[177•2] *Political Affairs*, September 1968, p. 24.

[177•3] Ibid., February 1968, p. 46; *Daily World*, May 21, 1969.

[177•4] In the union of longshoremen and building workers, an AFL-CIO affiliate, for example, there is not a single black officer, although black workers constitute 80 per cent of this union's membership.

[178•1] *Directory of National and International Labor Unions in the United States, 1965*. Bulletin No. 1493, p. 51.

[178•2] A serious obstacle to trade union membership growth are the so-called "right-to-work" laws provided for under Section 14b of the Taft-Hartley Act. While in 31 states, trade union members make up 34 per cent of the gainfully employed population, in the 19 states having right-to-work laws, the figure is only 15 per cent (*Directory of National and International Labor Unions in the United Slates, 1965*. Bulletin No. 1493, p. 57).

[179•1] *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November 1963, pp. 43–44.

[179•2] *The Values We Cherish. Keynote Address to the Filth Constitutional Convention of November 7, 1963*, p. 29.

[179•3] *The Worker*, May 16, 1965.

[180•1] *The Worker*, September 25, 1966.

[180•2] Ibid., April 7, 1968.

[180•3] Ibid., September 18, 1966.

[180•4] *Life*, January 19, 1968, p. 66.

[180•5] *Monthly Labor Review*, November 1967, p. 20.

[180•6] Ibid., August 1968, pp. III-IV.

[180•7] *The Worker*, May 19, 1968.

[181•1] *Unite for Peace, Negro Freedom, Labor's Advance, Socialism*, p. 77.

[181•2] *UE News*, August 10, 1970; *Newsweek*, August 10, 1970, p. 41.

[182•1] *RWDSU Record*, November 17, 1963.

[182•2] *Policy Resolutions*, Adopted by the Fourth AFL-CIO Constitutional Convention, December 1961, p. 66; *Policy Resolutions on Economic Issues*, Adopted November 1963 by the Fifth Constitutional Convention, AFL-CIO, p. 15.

[183•1] *Report of the President, Walter P. Reuther, to the 19th UAW Constitutional Convention*, Part 2, p. 105.

[183•2] *Report of the President to the llth Constitutional Convention. Transport Workers' Union of America*, October 2, 1961, p. 18.

[183•3] "*The New York Times*, January 17, 1965.

[183•4] *TWU Express*, February 1965.

[184•1] *The New York Times*, August 22, 1967.

[184•2] "Resolutions adopted at the founding conference of the Alliance for Labour Action", Washington, D. C., May 26, 27, 1969, p. 12.

[185•1] *The New York Times*, February 25, 1965.

[185•2] Theodore N. White, *The Making of the President 1968. A Narrative History of American Politics in Action*, Atheneum Publishers, New York, 1969, pp. 426–27.

[187•1] *Report of the President to the llth Constitutional Convention. Transport Workers Union of America*, October 2, 1961, p. 19.

[187•2] *Daily World*, November 13, 1969.

[187•3] *AFL-CIO News*, March 1, 1965.

[188•1] *Proceedings of the Sixteenth Biennial Convention of the International Longshoremen's and^ Warehousemen's Union*, p. 54.

[188•2] Philip S. Foner, *American Labor and Indochina War. "The Growth of Union Opposition*, International Publishers, New York, 1971, p. 25.

[189•1] The National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE) was founded in 1957 to work for a nuclear test-ban treaty. Its official title was changed in 1969 to Citizens' Organisation for a Sane World (SANE).

[190•1] *Labor's Voice for Peace*, January 1968, p. 16.

[190•2] Ibid.

[190•3] Philip S. Foner, op. cit., p. 52.

[192•1] *The Nation*, June 15, 1970.

[192•2] *The New York Times*, March 26, 1971.

[193•1] Philip S. Foner, op. cit., p. 107.

[193•2] Ibid., p. 85.

[194•1] *Peacework. The Voice of Labor for Peace*, No. 3, April 1971; *Peoples World*, April 17, 1971.

[195•1] *New Program of the Communist Party, USA*, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1970, p. 54.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE USA AND THE STRUGGLE OF THE WORKING CLASS

p The Communist Party of the USA—the vanguard of the progressive forces of the country—is waging a consistent struggle for the vital interests of the working class, against the oppression and omnipotence of the monopolies and in defence of democracy. Functioning in the citadel of imperialism and the target of consistent persecution and repression by the forces of reaction, the Communist Party of the USA directs all its energies toward mobilising a mass movement of working people against the brutal system of capitalist exploitation and all forms of social and national oppression.

p In recent years, on the basis of a scientific, MarxistLeninist analysis of new developments in American economic and socio-political life, the Communist Party of the USA has come out with a number of documents of great importance for promoting the further development and invigoration of the American labour movement. These are the programme statement of December 1962, entitled "The Way Ahead for American Labor", the Party's economic programme published in May 1964; the Party's draft Programme submitted for broad discussion on the eve of the Party's 18th National Convention in June 1966, and adopted at the 19th National Convention in 1969; as well as Gus Hall's reports to the 18th and 19th conventions and the resolutions adopted at those conventions. An important place in these documents is given over to making a profound scientific analysis of the class structure of American society today and defining the historic role of the American proletariat as the leader and organiser of working people in the struggle for liberation from the yoke of capital.

p In its statement, "The Way Ahead for American Labor", the Communist Party stressed that "the foundation of our Communist Party rests on the concept of the leading role of the working class and its historic mission to abolish exploitation. That is why, above all else, we are a working class party, 'the party of the poor and the oppressed'. That is why we place the greatest emphasis on the problems of the working class and on its decisive role in our country. That is why it is so vital to combat every tendency to underestimate the leading role of our American working class." [196•1

p In its struggle against bourgeois and reformist efforts to belittle the role of the American proletariat, the Communist Party of the USA vigorously exposes the fallacious and petty-bourgeois views of those who, proceeding from the false premise that the class-consciousness of working people diminishes as their living standard rises, endeavour to depreciate the class-consciousness of the proletariat and underrate the significance of the workers' struggle for their economic interests. Labour's struggle for the fulfilment of the most elementary demands—higher wages, a shorter workweek and greater job security—is in itself, notes the Communist Party of the USA, a colossal force in the service of progress.

p Rejecting all manner of capitulatory theories and false assertions based on a superficial study of class forces and the nature of the class struggle, Gus Hall, in his report to the 18th National Convention of the Party, said: "It is utterly wrong to think that, having won substantial gains, workers can simply sit back and enjoy them. On the contrary, the unions are compelled to wage unending warfare against the unceasing efforts of the employers to nullify and destroy these gains, not to speak of the additional struggle required to win further improvements.

p "Furthermore, these victories have a two-sided effect. There is not only the effect of the victory, but also the effect of the struggles through which it is won. It is through these battles that a worker can be shown the class nature of the 197 struggle. It is in the fires of struggle for a better life that he learns the meaning of class unity and class struggle. This is the path that leads the working class to the political arena of struggle; this is the path that leads to socialism." [197•1

p The Communist Party warns that the struggle for social progress cannot be expected to proceed spontaneously. The paramount duty of Communists and other progressive forces in America is to render all possible assistance in this struggle. The organised section of the working class—the trade unions—must carry out extremely important tasks. "The trade union movement has proved itself to be the most effective mass weapon our working class has with which to tackle the pressing economic and political problems of the day," a resolution of the 18th National Convention of the Communist Party of the USA stresses. ".. .We Communists have only the most fraternal concern for the wellbeing of this movement. It must receive our warmest support in good weather and bad." [197•2

p Over the years, the Communist Party has supported many social and economic demands set forth in the programmes of individual trade unions and the AFL-CIO. This refers particularly to demands for a 35-hour workweek with no reduction in weekly pay, demands for a guaranteed minimum wage, as well as to questions relating to unemployment, taxes, housing, anti-labour legislation and civil rights. In a statement issued in 1962, the Communist Party noted that the campaign for a 35-hour workweek "can present the first major defence of labour's right to work since the 1930s". [197•3 "The working of a 35-hour week," the statement continued, "would mean creating new jobs for millions, perhaps for as many as one-third of those at present on unemployment rolls. Even more significant, such a struggle and victory would infuse labour with a new spirit, a new vitality, a new vision." [197•4

p While noting that the trade union programme could, in 198 the presence of certain positive factors, become the basis for a struggle to fulfil the immediate demands of working people, the Communist Party, at the same time, declared: "Too often decisions of the AFL-CIO Conventions and Executive Council meetings remained on paper. A struggle to end this practice is overdue. Undemocratic practices, methods of 'business' unionism and class 'partnership' ideas, neglect of the unemployed workers, continued jurisdictional quarrels and raiding, expulsion policies, remaining discrimination practices

against Negroes, Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans—these evils still afflict many unions to one degree or another." [198•1

p The Communist Party did not restrict itself to merely supporting union programmes; it also came out with its own demands, which more fully reflected the needs of working people.

p The objectives to be fought for were outlined in the Communist Party's programme statement, "The Way Ahead for American Labor." These include:

p —a 30-hour workweek with pay as for 40 hours; annual wage increases; paid vacations; greater union control over work rates;

p —vigorous political action to place under government ownership certain branches of industry receiving large government subsidies and enterprises chronically operating under capacity. These enterprises should be switched over to producing materials for housing, school and hospital construction and other public works. Appropriate guarantees should also be sought to ensure the rights of unions and their participation in the democratic control over the operation of these enterprises. The government should be made responsible for providing jobs wherever private enterprise is unable to do so;

p —abolition of all forms of job discrimination against Negroes. Negroes should be given unrestricted opportunity for industrial training. A national fair employment control board should be established;

p —revocation of tax privileges for big business and a 199 substantial reduction in taxes paid by workers and all lowpaid working people;

p —establishment of price controls by the government, trade unions and consumers, and abolition of the present practice of price fixing by the monopolies;

p —adoption of federal public works programmes for youth and other workers, with wages set at union rates;

p —repudiation of government policies of wage freezing, strikebreaking and compulsory arbitration. Reinstatement of all trade union rights and the repeal of all anti-labour laws. Extension of the right to organise and to strike to all who work for hire;

p —raising the minimum wage for all workers to $2.50 per hour;

p —adoption of a programme of lifelong insurance, administered by the federal government under the social security system and financed by raising taxes on the big monopolies. Such a programme should provide for normal living conditions for the sick, disabled and unemployed; proper care for the aged and for workers and their families; retention of all the other benefits available under the present social security system and improvement of this system on the basis of recommendations by the labour movement.

Young people entering the job market, the programme statement noted, should receive adequate unemployment benefits until they find jobs. [199•1

p In 1964, when President Johnson announced, under the pressure of public opinion, his "war on poverty" programme and, a little later, his so-called Great Society programme, the Communist Party went further than merely criticising the President's programmes; it offered its own proposals for an effective struggle to eliminate the poverty and privation suffered by millions of Americans. While agreeing that government programmes, in principle, could and should help the American people in fighting for their vital interests, the Communist Party at the same time exposed the inadequacies and weaknesses of the promised reforms. The Communists warned that it would be naive to believe that 200 the "war on poverty" programme could really eliminate such inherent defects in the capitalist system as poverty and unemployment. In its economic programme, published on May 3, 1964, the Communist Party made its position crystal clear: "We are prepared to join wholly and without reservation in such a war. But if it is to be truly ' unconditional war', we need to go far beyond the very limited programme which President Johnson proposes. Such a war cannot be half-hearted or limited to 'band-aid' remedies. It must be determined and unrelenting, and must go to the heart of the problem. It must be a total war." [200•1

p "The basic cause of unemployment and poverty. . ." the Communist Party noted, "is not automation, nor is it personal shortcomings or misfortunes. On the contrary, the cause is an economic system in which production is for maximum private profit instead of for maximum public good. It is an economic system in which prices are jacked up while wages are held down, in which tens of billions of dollars a year are wasted on armaments and other unproductive expenditures while ... vital social needs go unfulfilled, while millions go hungry and jobless, in which abundance itself leads to poverty and privation. In short, the cause of poverty today is monopoly-dominated capitalism, and the war against poverty is a war against monopoly greed." [200•2

p Having outlined the immediate, day-to-day tasks and the more long-range tasks in the struggle, the Communist Party proposed that the first order of business should be to augment the funds earmarked for the war on poverty by making a sharp and substantial cut in military spending—by $20,000 million over the following two years, to begin with. [200•3

p The top priority demands outlined by the Communist Party in its programme for day-to-day struggle were as follows:

p —jobs for all willing and able to work;

p —abolition of segregation and discrimination;

p —elimination of the ghettoes;

p —adequate benefits for all needy and unemployed;

p —ensuring a future for American youth;

p —assistance to small farmers and agricultural workers;

p —redevelopment of areas in which there is chronic unemployment;

p —government control over automation;

p —protection of trade union rights.

p In its 1964 economic programme, the Party also proposed measures to limit the power of the monopolies, and these proposals were further developed in the New Programme of the Communist Party of the USA, adopted at its 19th National Convention. Special attention was focussed on basic reforms that would pave the way for revolutionary changes, strike at the power of big business and bring the people genuine economic and political gains at the expense of the monopolies. The New Programme of the Communist Party of the USA notes that the reform programme should be centred around three major problems—the economic welfare of the people, peace and freedom.

p “Most urgent,” the programme stresses, "is a halt to US imperialist aggression and reversal of the militarisation of our country. With this go measures against racist oppression, exploitation and humiliation of the Black people. The fight for peace and freedom is in turn the spearhead of a fight for a reallocation of national resources that will give priority to the problems of slums, ghettoes and poverty, of urban crisis and deteriorating public services.” [201•1

p The programme of basic reforms envisages a number of important measures, such as: democratisation of the country’s entire economic life; the actual realisation of the right to work; elimination of mass unemployment; expanded social insurance; nationalisation of certain industries; a radical tax reform aimed at taxing the rich; public ownership in all mass information media under public control; repeal of repressive laws. [201•2

p While it set forth the broad outlines of necessary basic reforms and pointed out the general directions of the 202 struggle for their accomplishment within the framework of the existing social system, the Communist Party of the USA at the same time emphasised that "the social crisis can be resolved fundamentally only through the replacement of capitalism with socialism.” [202•1 The Communist Party regards the struggle for reforms as "basic training for the fight to take complete political power". [202•2 "We Communists,” the New Programme noted, "motivated by the elemental human needs of our class and our people, fight the evils of capitalism. Ours is the fate of our class and our people. The trials of their existence are ours. We strive for improvement of their condition here and now. Often this is a life-and-death question. At the same time, we are convinced that socialism, and beyond it communism, offers the only fundamental, lasting solution to the problems of exploitation and oppression, that it opens the only door to an

immeasurable improvement in the quality of man's life. Thus the struggle for revolution is the logical continuation of the struggle for a better life." [202•3

p Pointing out in its documents that the struggle against poverty and unemployment, for a higher living standard, for civil rights and for democracy is above all a struggle against the power and dominance of the monopolies, the Communist Party lays stress on the fact that the key to success in the anti-monopoly struggle is the unity of all strata of American society—the working class, the blacks, the small farmers and small businessmen, etc.

p In its efforts to promote united action by the working class and its allies, to create a single anti-monopoly front, the Communist Party places primary emphasis on work in the trade unions, which carry the main responsibility for mobilising all working people. "Without such united action, not even the most meagre programme can be won. With it, the foundation can be laid for the building of a political coalition against the trusts headed by organised labour and 203 powerful enough to wrest basic concessions from them." [203•1 It is the profound conviction of the Communists that such a struggle will lead to the creation of a new political majority. First, a majority that will challenge the corporate Establishment and fight for radical reforms. Then, arising from this conflict, a political majority for the socialist alternative.

p In their new party programme, the American Communists say: ". . .We conceive of a path to socialism in America encompassing ever more determined and widening struggle against exploitation, against imperialism, against racism, against war and colonialism, for an ever more viable democracy that includes all our people, white and black. We see it as encompassing struggle for progressively more radical measures, as dictated by necessity, to realise the potential for abundance, knowledge, culture and human happiness created by the genius of American labour and science.

"For us socialism represents a culmination, a crowning achievement of democratic struggle for a better life." [203•2

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Notes

[196•1] "The Way Ahead for American Labor". By the Communist Party, USA, *Political Affairs*, December 1962, p. 11.

[197•1] Gus Hall, *For a Radical Change—the Communist View*, p. 23.

[197•2] *Unite for Peace, Negro Freedom, Labor's Advance, Socialism*, pp. 9-10.

[197•3] "The Way Ahead for American Labor". By the Communist Party, USA, *Political Affairs*, December 1962, p. 7.

[197•4] Ibid., pp. 7-8.

[198•1] "The Way Ahead for American Labor". By the Communist Party, USA, *Political Affairs*, December 1962, p. 7.

[199•1] "The Way Ahead for American Labor". By the Communist Party, USA, *Political Affairs*, December 1962, pp. 13–14.

[200•1] "People's Program offered by the Communist Party. To End Poverty and Unemployment", *The Worker*, May 3, 1964.

[200•2] Ibid.

[200•3] Ibid.

[201•1] *New Program of the Communist Party*, USA, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1970, p. 85.

[201•2] Ibid., pp. 85–87.

[202•1] *New Program of the Communist Party, USA*, p. 88.

[202•2] Ibid.

[202•3] *New Program of the Communist Party, USA*. New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1970, p. 88.

[203•1] "People's Program Offered by the Communist Party. To End Poverty and Unemployment", *The Worker*, May 3, 1964.

[203•2] *New Program of the Communist Party, USA*, p. 94.